FAMOUS AMERICANS
FOR YOUNG READERS

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

J. WALKER McSPADDEN

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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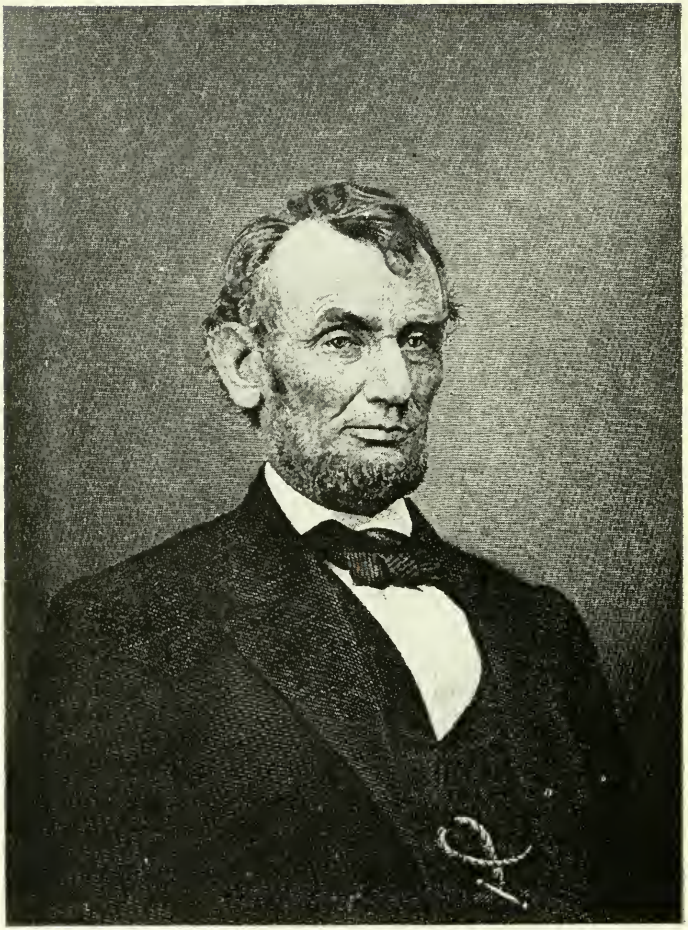

A. Lincoln

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THE · STORY · OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY

J. WALKER McSPADDEN

BARSE & HOPKINS

NEW YORK N.Y.

NEWARK N.J.

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PREFACE

The story of Abraham Lincoln's life is one that will never grow old. It is one that makes every fairy tale seem paltry by comparison. No Aladdin depending for his fortune upon a genie of the lamp can hope to rival in interest this humble backwoods boy who rose by his own efforts to the leadership of a great nation. His life story is a constant inspiration to every other boy in the land—and will continue so for countless generations.

This book tries to avoid, on the one hand, the formal biography with its bristling array of names and dates; and on the other, the panegyric of praise. It is a story-telling account emphasizing the picturesque and human phases of his career. It tries to depict the boy and man as the friend and neighbor that Lincoln himself tried to be all through life.

The present writer is by birth and education a Southerner. His father was a Confederate soldier. Never in that Southern home or community does he recall having heard an unkind word against the person or character of Abraham Lincoln. The South was not long in recognizing, after the War, that had Lincoln been spared, the wounds of strife would have

been healed many years earlier than they were. May we be pardoned this personal reference and tribute to a great Southerner, who also had the world vision of the brotherhood of man.

J. W. M.

Montclair, N. J.
Lincoln's Birthday,
1922.

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THE STORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

I

A HOME IN THE WILDERNESS

"Are we nearly there, Tom?"

"Purty nigh, I reckon. If we only had a trail, we could make it easy by sundown."

The speakers were a pioneer woman and her husband, in the wilds of Kentucky. The time was a little over a century ago. The woman was perched insecurely on the seat of a prairie "schooner"—a clumsy-looking wagon with bulging white canvas top, drawn by two patient oxen. Her husband trudged on ahead of the team, striving to clear some sort of a road. But it was slow work at best; and even the lumbering beasts had to stop from time to time to await his efforts.

The man, Tom Lincoln, was clad in rough homespun with fringed leggings, moccasins on

his feet, and a coon-skin cap on his head. His tall, spare, but vigorous frame was that of the typical frontiersman.

By the side of his wife, in the wagon, were two children—a girl of about seven and a boy two years younger. Nancy, the little girl, was plainly tired out from their toilsome journey; but her small brother, Abraham, still looked about him with eyes of interest.

It was a wild and picturesque country that they were traversing—one which, a few short years before, had been held by the Indians as one of their favorite hunting grounds, and occasional bands still wandered that way. The woods were full of wild fowl and other small game, to say nothing of occasional bear and deer. The land was rolling, and cut across by gullies or ravines, down one of which, as they neared their destination, a swift, clear stream made its way. Knob Creek was its name, and later on the boy was to become well acquainted with it. It formed the northern boundary of the new piece of land which Tom Lincoln was clearing, and finally flowed into Salt River, a stream which empties into the Ohio River about twenty-five miles west of Louisville.

The Lincoln family was making one of many moves. Tom Lincoln had been more or less of a wanderer all his life; and while a well-meaning sort of person, had never stuck to anything or any place long enough to "make good." He was a carpenter by trade, but lack of work had forced him back to till the soil, like all his pioneer neighbors.

A few years before our story opens, he had married a girl in Elizabethtown, a village where he plied his trade as a carpenter. Her name was Nancy Hanks, and she was a tall, dark-haired, attractive girl, with more culture and education than the average frontier lass. They had lived very happily, although not far removed from want, in a little cabin in the town, and here their first child, Nancy, was born.

Tom had managed to secure a piece of land on Nolin Creek, and he decided to try his hand at farming. His friends and neighbors gathered at the "log-rolling," as was the custom in those days, and soon they had erected a small cabin built entirely of logs. It had only one window, one door, no floor other than the hard-beaten clay, and an outside chimney made of

poles and clay. But humble and plain though it was, it was quite as "homey" and comfortable as the majority of the settlers' homes in that section. Out on the frontier no one "put on airs."

This simple log cabin near what is now Hodgensville, Kentucky, was destined to fame. Its very timbers were to be lovingly preserved by a later generation. For here, on February 12, 1809, the boy, Abraham Lincoln, was born.

During those first few years, he and his sister had few of the ordinary comforts of life. The cabin was bare of everything except a few cooking utensils and simple pieces of furniture, such as the father himself constructed. But a big roaring fire blazed on the hearth of cold nights; and Tom's rifle kept the table supplied with meat. Their mother, too, was a wonderful cook and a good housekeeper; and many a story did she tell them by the fireside—most often tales from the Bible. So the boy and girl were happy and contented in their wilderness home.

When Abraham was nearly five his father was again seized with the wanderlust. He

found the land unproductive, and he heard of some better land about fifteen miles away, at Knob Creek. The little log cabin was accordingly forsaken for a new one of about the same pattern. Moving was a simple process, so far as household effects was concerned, but there were no roads, and the heavy, springless wagon was anything but easy to move across the rough country. It must have been a happy little family indeed, which alighted just as dusk was settling, and looked around the new clearing that was thenceforth to be "home."

"Well, we're hy'ar," drawled Tom Lincoln, as he began to unspan the oxen.

II

LIFE ON A FRONTIER FARM

Work was not long in finding the boy and girl of those days. By the time Abraham Lincoln was five years old, he had taken up his share of the daily duties. He carried in loads of wood, as his father chopped it. He picked up chips. He fetched water. He followed his father up one row and down another, dropping seeds in the new furrows.

One such planting time he never forgot. Through a long hot afternoon he went patiently from one corn hill to another, dropping two pumpkin seeds in every other hill. Visions of the long, trailing vines and the golden fruit of autumn may have come to hearten them at their task. But, that night, when they had come home, footsore and weary, a heavy rain descended, flooding the valley and washing out every one of their precious seed. It was just another stroke of ill-luck which seemed to follow Tom Lincoln all his life.

Later he grew discouraged, instead of bucking up against it and fighting all the harder; and folks began to call him "shiftless."

The two children, between-whiles of their daily work, had some schooling. A small district school was opened near them, and with other boys and girls they attended for about three months in the year. The teaching was of the simplest; the blue-backed speller, an arithmetic, a writing copy book, and a hickory switch being about all that were used.

The benches were made of split logs, turned flat side up, and with pegs for legs. There were no blackboards nor slates. Two of the wandering school-teachers who came their way for a few short weeks were Zachariah Riney and Caleb Hazel. They were Abraham's first teachers, but the boy learned a great deal more from his mother at home, than from them. She it was who first taught him to write his name in sprawling characters, and spell his way slowly through the Bible and Aesop's Fables.

Tom Lincoln, the father, tried to learn, too —but he was too tired, and his brain was too old to make much progress. While he did not discourage education for his children, he felt

that the ax and the rifle were more useful in the wilderness than the pen.

The boy, Abraham, found some fun in life, despite the hard work. He and Nancy had many a ramble together. At school he met a boy of about his own age, Austin Gallagher, who lived not many miles away. The two lads visited back and forth constantly, and their favorite time for excursions afield was on Sunday afternoons. They learned to snare rabbits, and to throw stones with unerring aim at partridges. They learned to follow the tracks of animals, to know the call of birds, to locate the pool where the biggest fish disported, the glen where the finest berries were to be found. They would have made wonderful Boy Scouts of a later day, for they had the finest possible training ground—the primitive woods themselves.

Once, Abraham had a narrow escape. He and Austin were walking a log across Knob Creek, when Abraham slipped and fell in. The stream was swollen from recent rains, and was not only deep but swift. With rare presence of mind, Austin seized a long tree limb, and held it out to his struggling friend. Abra-

ham had just strength to seize it, and was painfully hauled ashore. He was more dead than alive, and Austin was thoroughly frightened.

"I rolled and pounded him in dead earnest," he said afterwards, "then I got him by the arms and shook him, while the water poured out of his mouth. By this means I at last brought him to, and soon he was all right."

One other incident is treasured of Lincoln's early days, and he himself related it.

"Do you remember anything about the War of 1812?" he was once asked.

"Nothing about the war itself," he replied. "But once when I was a boy of about five or six, I was going along the road, on my way home from a fishing trip. I had one small fish —it may have been my first one, I do not now know. I met a soldier—and into my mind flashed one of my mother's precepts—to be kind to the soldiers because they fought and were willing to die for their country. So I turned and gave my one small fish to the soldier!"

When the boy was seven years old, his father decided to move again—this time to Indiana,

where, he heard, the soil was still richer. Tom Lincoln was of the type to whom the place just around the corner was always better than the one he had. Indiana had but recently been admitted as a State, and plenty of land was available for settlers. So he sold his Knob Creek farm for a small amount of ready money and some barrels of whiskey (the latter being a ready means of barter both with Indians and settlers), put his worldly possessions on a raft, and floated down to the Ohio River, in search of his new home.

Poor, patient Nancy Hanks Lincoln must have viewed with misgiving this uprooting of another home; or she may have taken it with the calm fortitude of the pioneer wife. She prepared to pack up their household effects, while Tom went on ahead to locate a new home to the North.

III

LIVING FROM HAND TO MOUTH

Tom Lincoln's bad luck still pursued him. He made his way up into Indiana partly by boat, and partly afoot. Once his boat capsized and his cargo went overboard; but the river was shallow here, and it was recovered. Later he was able to convert it into the cash that he so much needed.

He went inland from Thompson's Ferry, and finally reached a site about fifteen miles away, on Little Pigeon Creek, which struck his fancy. It was really virgin forest, but to his practised eye it showed great possibilities. But, oh, the labor involved before a home could be made! There was literally nothing but forest and undergrowth. But, undaunted, he made his way back nearly a hundred miles to Knob Creek, got his family and belongings together, and once more they set forth.

To the patient mother it may have been a dubious move; but to the children it was a

joyous adventure. They were not afraid of hardship. There had been hardships a-plenty in their old home. They did not know where they were going but, like the Southern darky, they were "on their way." It was the fall of the year and Nature had donned her prettiest robes. There were nuts and berries in the woods, and always abundant game.

The Lincoln family traveled like gypsies, going slowly and camping along in likely spots. On rainy nights they slept under the cover of their lumbering ox-cart. On clear nights they had a big blazing fire in the open. They crossed the Ohio River, team and all, on a ferry-boat. The final lap of their journey was through the pathless woods, and must have been slow going indeed.

At last after weeks of wandering they drew up into the little clearing that was now their only "home."

They reached the new location too late in the year to build a log cabin, but they made a lean-to, faced toward the south, and by hanging skins over the opening and making a huge fire-place and rude chimney at the open end, they managed to keep comfortable. It was the

sort of shelter that pioneers often made when they first located and, nestling in the deep woods, which served as a wind-brake, could be made fairly weather tight.

But with winter facing them, there was no time for any hands to idle, however young. Tom turned to his boy and put an ax in his hand.

"Hy'ar, Abe," he said. "You'll never l'arn any younger. Get busy on them saplin's"—indicating the thicket of underbrush which lay around their shack.

Abraham was then about seven years old, but he tackled the job manfully. Years after, in writing about it, he said that it "was a region with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods, and the clearing away of the surplus wood was the great task ahead. Abraham, though very young, was large for his age, and had an ax put in his hands at once; and from that time till within his twenty-third year he was almost constantly handling that most useful instrument."

During the next twelvemonth they lived almost from hand to mouth. Each day the problem was to provide food, fuel and water.

Unfortunately, the new home site had no spring or running water, and the children had to carry water nearly a mile. Tom Lincoln would shoulder his gun in the morning and go in search of game, while the others would follow the endless round of duties of a camp. Once Abraham killed a wild turkey which had come too near the camp, and they had a feast. But he was never much of a hunter—he disliked to kill things—although he could prepare the skins and cure the meat. And he became an expert axman.

With spring came a huge pile of new duties. The ground must be cleared, stumps cleared away, the soil plowed and sowed. To increase the difficulty there were many stones to be removed. Painfully they prepared a small plot of land, and while waiting for their crops to grow they set about building a log cabin. By autumn it was finished, except for door and windows, and they moved in with great satisfaction. It was like getting home again, for a log cabin was the best house that they knew.

Scarcely had they moved out of their half-shelter camp, when some relatives moved into

it. They were a man and wife, Thomas and Betsey Sparrow, and a grandson, Dennis Hanks. Betsey was a sister of Mrs. Lincoln, and the two women were glad indeed to have this companionship in the wilderness. The boy Dennis was somewhat older than Abraham, but they speedily became great friends. He had longed for a boy chum ever since bidding farewell to Austin.

The little clearing, under the combined efforts of the two families, began to look like home. Their ground had produced some corn and vegetables, and enough fodder to support a cow and a few hogs. They faced the second winter on Pigeon Creek in much better shape than the first—although the new cabin still lacked a floor or covers for its windows and door. That seemed to be a trait of Tom Lincoln's—never quite to finish a thing.

But just at this time, when the skies seemed brighter, a dreadful misfortune fell upon them. An epidemic called the "milk fever" swept through the country, and both the Sparrows and Mrs. Lincoln took sick and died. Poor Nancy Lincoln! As she lay there at rest in her rude pine box, her hands were folded peace-

fully for the first time in many weary months —ever since, indeed, as a bride she had first faced the wilderness. But she was only one of thousands of other pioneer mothers, who toiled and suffered that their children and children's children might have a real home.

Forlornly, Abraham and his sister followed the little funeral procession out to a wooded knoll, half a mile away, where the burial was made. It was a dismal day indeed; only half a dozen neighbors were present, and there was not even a funeral service, as the epidemic had been severe and no preacher was available. To Abraham this was the hardest blow of all. He brooded over the fact that no prayer was said over the body of his mother; and several years later when a minister was in the neighborhood, he persuaded him to go out to the little knoll. Together they knelt down and repeated:

"The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

Then Abraham Lincoln went back to his work with something like peace in his heart. For his mother's spirit must have been near

him that day. And that spirit knew, in the years to come, that this boy growing up in the wilderness would be her own best monument.

IV

BETTER TIMES AHEAD

That winter, in which Abraham passed his tenth year, was dismal and wretched. Nancy tried her best to take her dead mother's place, but she was only twelve and not very strong. She could cook after a fashion, but not sew. Their mother, with her fund of evening stories and good cheer, was gone, and desolate indeed were those shut-in days. Abraham spoke of them in later years as "pretty pinching times."

Tom Lincoln looked at his motherless children and shook his head. Something must be done. One day he bade them good-bye, and told them he was going on business to Elizabethtown. Arriving there, he called on a widow, Mrs. Sarah Bush Johnston, whom he had known in childhood. He lost no time in coming straight to the point of his visit.

"Sarah," he said, "you are a widow woman and I am a widow man. Our children are

growing up—yours without a father and mine without a mother. I come down here a-purpose to marry you. I knowed you as a gal and you knowed me as a boy. I'll do by you the best I know how. What do you say?"

This honest, straightforward wooing had its effect. The widow accepted. They were married, and she packed up her household effects—which were in much better shape than Tom Lincoln's—and accompanied him back to the Indiana clearing.

What whoops of joy were exchanged when Abraham and Nancy greeted their new mother and brother and sisters; for the three Johnston children were near their own ages! And what a transformation did the new mother work in their home! She began with the children themselves, and with soap and water gave them such a scrubbing as they had not had in months. She gave them clothes that were not full of holes. She brought real feather-beds with her, to replace the worn corn-shuck mattresses. She had some few pieces of serviceable furniture, and she made Tom Lincoln get busy and finish that long-promised floor, the door and windows. Best of all, she won the affection of

both the Lincoln children, so that they came to love her quite as their own mother.

The better times ahead, for which Nancy Hanks Lincoln had longed, began to dawn for the new home. Every year saw a little more land cleared, a little more grain laid by for the winter, and a few more live stock. Settlers began to move in closer to them, until a thriving little community arose. With this came many opportunities for Tom to ply his trade as a carpenter. Many a piece of furniture or bit of house finishing was he enabled to do. With the coming of easier times his old careless ways were laid aside. His second wife saw to it that they did not return.

Meanwhile, young Abe Lincoln was growing straight and tall, like one of the sycamore saplings of the clearing. Working early and late out in the open, swinging ax or hoe in all sorts of weather, had made him strong and hardy. At fourteen he was as tall as the average man, and could "lick" most of them. He seemed all arms and legs, with big heavy hands and feet, but he was not nearly so clumsy as he looked. He learned to use his father's kit of tools, and he often did odd jobs for the neigh-

bors. And everywhere he went he made friends, because he worked willingly and was always good-natured.

What troubled him most, at this time, was his lack of schooling. The school terms were extremely short, and woefully inadequate to a boy as ambitious as Abraham. He confided his desire to get an education to his second mother, and found her a willing ally. From the first she seems to have sensed that this awkward, long-legged boy was cut out for something better than a backwoods carpenter. She stood between the boy and his father more than once when the latter lost his patience, on coming home and finding Abe reading instead of "tending to his work."

"Let him alone, Tom," she would plead. "He's just got to have book learnin'. It was born in him."

"Almighty gosh!" the disgusted man would snort. "Here he won't l'arn the carpenter trade, an' there's folks all over the county needin' work done. What good can he do with his book l'arnin', I'd like to know?"

"Well, he might be a teacher, or a lawyer, or a preacher," she ventured.

Tom snorted again.

"Yes, and starve to death at all three of em! What's the use of wastin' time when there's work to do!"

That was Tom Lincoln's attitude, and his son was never able to change it. The boy was forced to hide his books in the daytime; but at night he was unmolested, and by the blazing pine-knots on the hearth he would stretch out at full length reading some history or geography, or working out sums of arithmetic on a piece of shingle or the back of the broad fire shovel, with charcoal. When he by chance was able to borrow from the slender stock of books in the vicinity he was happy indeed; and he read and reread the precious volume before returning it. One of the books which fell into his hands belonged to a schoolmaster, Josiah Crawford, and reached the boy just at the moment to fire his imagination and direct his whole life. It was Weems's "Life of Washington," now considered out of date in its facts and style. As the boy Lincoln read of that other boy who had been a surveyor in the Virginia forests, and had worked his way

up to the leadership of a new nation, his own deep-set eyes glowed with a new light, and his hand unconsciously grasped the book a little tighter.

One night after he had been reading this book, he carried it up to his attic bed with him. There was a hole in the roof, and a rainstorm set in, which found a leak right over this precious volume. In the morning he was dismayed to find it water-soaked. He dried it out as best he could and carried it back to the teacher, with an apology and an offer to make the damage good. The irate master said that the book was ruined, and that Lincoln owed him seventy-five cents for it, which he could pay by working three days at pulling fodder. The boy did so, but felt repaid, for the book then belonged to him.

Other treasured volumes were the Bible, which he had early learned at his first mother's knee. Its dignity and simplicity of style undoubtedly colored his own later marvelous command of words. He read Aesop's Fables, also, and Pilgrim's Progress. Whenever he heard others use words, or allude to facts that

he could not understand, he could not rest until he got to the bottom of them. As he himself said, later:

"I remember how, when a mere child, I used to get irritated when anybody talked to me in a way I could not understand. I do not think I ever got angry at anything else in my life; but that always disturbed my temper, and has ever since. I can remember going to my little bedroom, after hearing the neighbors talk of an evening with my father, and spending no small part of the night walking up and down and trying to make out what was the exact meaning of some of their, to me, dark sayings. I could not sleep, although I tried to, when I got on such a hunt for an idea, until I had caught it; and when I thought I had got it, I was not satisfied until I had repeated it over and over; until I had put it in language plain enough, as I thought, for any boy I knew to comprehend. This was a kind of passion with me, and it has stuck by me; for I am never easy now, when I am handling a thought, till I have bounded it north, and bounded it south, and bounded it east, and bounded it west."

This little self-revealing glimpse shows us both his early hunger for knowledge and his constant desire to express his own ideas clearly and simply, so that all could understand. It was the secret of his great success later as a campaign orator.

But altogether, Abraham's days at school, from his seventh to his seventeenth year, would not have made a full year. His father had a habit of "needing him," just about the time a term was well started. The boy could earn twenty-five cents a day on outside jobs, and Tom felt that it would be a sin and shame to let such opportunities go begging. Nevertheless, here and there, Abe did get some schooling. He attended the district school infrequently, where some of the pupils laughed at his scarecrow appearance. But he speedily won their respect both in the classroom and on the playground. He was a natural-born speller, and was eagerly chosen for the Friday spelling contests from the old "blue back" book. He could outrun and outwrestle any boy. He always played fair, and they picked him for umpire. And he had a constant fund

of droll stories, many of which he had inherited from his father, and which he would relate with a delicious dialect and pantomime.

They tell of him, in these early days, that his chief fault—almost his only one—was to let story-telling interfere with his work. He would drop his ax or saw any time to tell a story; so perhaps his father had some excuse for his impatience. One of his chief joys was to go to mill. In those days every farm-boy had to take his corn and wheat to the nearest mill to be ground, and then return home with the flour. Often they had to wait their turn, which suited Abe exactly. He was soon surrounded by an eager group of listeners, to whom he held forth with a seemingly inexhaustible supply of yarns.

One day while waiting at the mill his horse grew skittish. He walked over behind the animal, exclaiming, "Whoa there, you—" But before he could complete his sentence the horse let fly with a heel and knocked him senseless. For an hour or more he lay there like dead, and many of his friends thought he was killed. But at last they revived him, when he sat up, calling, "old hussy!"

He had completed his sentence exactly from the place where it was broken off when the horse kicked him!

If there is a moral to this little story, Lincoln might have said that it is: "Never start anything that you can't finish!"

V

NEW FACES AND SCENES

When Lincoln was eighteen he had reached his full height, six feet, four inches. He must have been an even more impressive figure then, than he was in later life, for he had not had time to round out any of the hollows in his angular frame. His head sat high up on a slender neck which had an enormous "Adam's apple." The head itself was surmounted by a tousled shock of dark hair, which never by any chance was kept smooth, due to his habit of using the locks for a towel, or to tug at, when in search of ideas. His legs were of tremendous length, for a boy. Once when asked how long he thought legs really ought to be, he replied, "Well, I reckon about long enough to reach from the body to the ground!"

His mother often jested with him about his height, saying that she was afraid he would mark up her ceiling; for by this time, you must know, their cabin had arrived at the dignity of

whitewash, both inside and out. Abraham resolved to turn the jest upon her, and one day, in her absence, brought home with him a small boy, whose feet he carefully blackened. Then turning him upside down in his own strong arms, he assisted the little fellow to walk across the ceiling. When Mrs. Lincoln came home and saw those footprints, she didn't know whether to laugh or cry; but the funny side struck her first, and she forgave her joke-loving son when he assured her he intended to whitewash the ceiling again anyhow.

The young man's love of a joke came to be a local byword. But he was never accused of doing anything mean or underhand. This and his love of books were set aside as marks of queerness. They accused him of trying to plow with one hand, while the other held onto a book which he busily devoured! But everybody liked him, because he was cheerful and always willing to help out at any log-rolling or other local festivity.

And how strong he was! He could cut down two trees while the next man cut one. He cut and split rails all day—"and good rails, too," as he afterwards averred. He could

hoist a log that baffled the efforts of two men.

A small town arose, a couple of miles away from the Lincoln farm, which was called Gentryville. At this time it was little more than a village containing a general store, in which one might find anything from carpet tacks to molasses, and where the farm products might be exchanged for other necessities. A man by the name of Jones ran this store, and he asked Abe to clerk for him. The young man gladly accepted. It was the sort of thing that he liked. A country store of this type was a community center. Here people came in to swap views on any subject, from the weather to how to run the government. The weekly paper from Louisville arrived here. Politics was a lively topic of discussion, then as always, and the tall youth behind the counter, as he weighed sugar or measured calico, got his first schooling in this topic, of which he was one day to be past master.

Another venture which attracted him, because of the possibility of meeting new people and also earning money, was to take a boatload of produce down the river to New Orleans, and sell it. He had got this idea first while,

as a lad of seventeen, he worked a ferry back and forth at the mouth of Anderson Creek, on the Ohio. The river steamers were beginning to make regular trips on the Ohio and Mississippi; and as he watched these big, ungainly craft he was seized with a consuming desire to see the world. But what other boy has not been a victim of the same travel fever? Lincoln also watched the barges and other flatboats making their leisurely way down stream. These boats usually had a tent or shack on board for the crew, and the latter consisted of two men to manage the sweeps or long oars which kept the craft in the center of the current. Under good conditions, they could make about six miles an hour; and once at St. Louis or New Orleans they sold their entire outfit, boat and cargo, and came back by steamer.

Lincoln diligently tended his crops that summer, and built a flatboat to carry them. His job as clerk in Jones's store postponed his voyage, however, and about the time he was ready to try it again, he had an opportunity to ship on another boat. But there is another incident of this time that is worth repeating, especially as it is told in Lincoln's own words.

"I was about eighteen years of age . . . we had succeeded in raising, chiefly by my labor, sufficient produce, as I thought, to justify me in taking it down the river to sell. After much persuasion I had got the consent of my mother to go, and had constructed a flatboat large enough to take a few barrels of things we had gathered to New Orleans. A steamer was going down the river. We have, you know, no wharves on the western streams, and the custom was, if passengers were at any of the landings they were to go out in a boat, the steamer stopping and taking them on board. I was contemplating my new boat, and wondering whether I could make it stronger or improve it in any part, when two men with trunks came down to the shore in carriages, and looking at the different boats, singled out mine and asked, 'Who owns this?' I answered modestly, 'I do.' 'Will you,' said one of them, 'take us and our trunks out to the steamer?' 'Certainly,' said I. I was very glad to have the chance of earning something, and supposed that each of them would give me a couple of bits. The trunks were put in my boat, the passengers seated themselves on them, and I

sculled them out to the steamer. They got on board and I lifted the trunks and put them on the deck. The steamer was about to put on steam again, when I called out, 'You have forgotten to pay me.' Each of them took from his pocket a silver half dollar and threw it on the bottom of my boat. I could scarcely believe my eyes as I picked up the money. You may think it was a very little thing, and in these days it seems to me like a trifle, but it was a most important incident in my life. I could scarcely credit that I, a poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day; that by honest work I had earned a dollar. I was a more hopeful and thoughtful boy from that time."

Lincoln's keen hunger for books at this time has been often mentioned by his former neighbors. Anything in the shape of a book fascinated him. He would walk fifty miles to borrow one, and would sit up late at night copying long extracts from its pages, into books of his own manufacture. His pens were made from wild turkey quills, and his ink from poke-berry or brier-root. One man in Gentryville owned a copy of the Statutes of Indiana,

and Lincoln nosed it out, as a terrier would a bone. It contained the laws of the State and also the Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States. Abe read this with his accustomed thoroughness, and it may have given him his first incentive to become a lawyer.

Another incident showing the wide range of his reading for those days is related by a woman who, as a girl, was a schoolmate of Lincoln's. He had earned her gratitude by helping her out in a spelling contest. When she was on the point of spelling "defied" with a "y," he pointed to his own eye just in time to save her from going down to defeat. She was a good-looking girl near his own age, and the lanky backwoodsman took a decided "shine" to her. But one day all his hopes for her favor went tumbling. It was all due to a casual remark she made while they were taking an evening stroll.

"Look, Abe," she said, "the sun is going down."

"Reckon not," was the unguarded reply; "it's us coming up, that's all."

"Don't you suppose I've got eyes?" she

replied indignantly. "We're standing still, and the sun's going down."

"It just looks that way," Abe remonstrated. "The sun's as still as a tree, and we're just swinging around it. When it's down we're up, and when we're up it's down—that's all."

"Abe, you talk like a consarned fool," the girl answered, and walked away with a toss of her head, to show her disgust at his "stuck-up l'arnin'."

At last Lincoln had his long-dreamed-of opportunity of going to New Orleans. Mr. Gentry, the leading citizen of Gentryville, had been attracted by the boy, as he saw him clerking in the store, and now asked Abe to go on a boat he was sending down. Gentry's own son was going also, and Abe was offered eight dollars a month and his passage back, for the trip. We can well believe that the boy jumped at the chance. In those days it meant more than a trip to Europe does now.

The two young men had "the time of their lives" on this trip. There was plenty of hard work managing the cumbersome craft, as it was seized by capricious cross currents, eddies, or rapids. But the work only added zest to

the adventure. They disposed of their cargo at a good profit, spent a little time sight-seeing around the historic old city, and then came back by steamer as first-class passengers.

This trip, with its novelty and ever-changing scenes, filled Lincoln with the desire to see more of the world. He talked seriously of becoming a river pilot, but was persuaded to stay with his father until he was twenty-one.

VI

STRIKING OUT FOR HIMSELF

"Sarah, I reckon as how we'd better pull up stakes again," Tom Lincoln remarked one morning.

They had been discussing another move—this time to Illinois. The farm on Pigeon Creek, while giving them a living, had done little else; and Tom Lincoln's naturally restless spirit longed for a change of scene.

"John Hanks writes me that he can get a mighty fine piece of land, on the Sangamon, for a dollar and a quarter an acre," he continued. "It sounds good, and I shore am tired of plowin' up rocks."

"All right, Tom," replied Mrs. Lincoln. "What do you say, Abe?" she asked, turning to him.

Abe had just been reading the letter from their Cousin John. It did indeed sound alluring. For several reasons he was more than

willing to go. His sister Nancy (also known as Sarah, after her second mother), had recently died. It was the second deep grief which had come into his life. Then, too, the "milk sickness" epidemic had broken out again, and Pigeon Creek seemed unhealthful.

"I'm willing to go," he said.

So it was decided, and in the spring of 1830, when Abe was just turned twenty-one, they turned their faces westward. Abe himself had been making plans as to what he should do when he became a man, but he postponed them until his family should be settled in their new home. It was fortunate for them all that he did remain with them on this move, for it required their united efforts to carry it through without mishap. The roads, such as they were, had sunk deep in mud and water from the spring rains, and the heavy wagons were constantly mired up. Nothing but Abe's tremendous strength and unflagging courage pulled them through.

One little incident of this journey gives us a glimpse of Abe's tender heart. A dog had broken through the thin ice of a stream and was in imminent danger of drowning. Despite

the family's protests, Abe rolled up his trousers and waded out into the treacherous, icy stream, and rescued the dog.

Abe did a stroke of business for himself on the way. Before leaving Gentryville he purchased a stock of small household supplies—pins, needles, combs, brushes, pans, and the like—from Mr. Jones. He sold them along the way, and eventually disposed of all, doubling his money in the venture.

At last they reached the site of their new home, near that of their Cousin John and about ten miles west of Decatur. The spot looked attractive, and they set to work with high hopes. Most of that summer and winter Abe helped his father, with only occasional side jobs. They got their cabin up and weather-tight before the cold weather set in, and it was lucky they did so. That winter was famous for its severity. A deep snow fell, followed by a prolonged cold spell. There was much suffering in the sparsely-settled community. But the Lincolns managed to weather the storm.

With the coming of another spring, Abe felt that it was high time to strike out for him-

self. The breaking of home ties was not easy, but it comes to every young man. Abe had been an obedient son, and had gotten along well with his father, without either of them fully understanding the other. But between him and his stepmother a deep sympathy and affection existed.

"Our minds were always open, the one to the other," she said later. And although she had children of her own, she added that "Abe was the best boy I ever saw, or expect to see."

So with a "God bless you, my son," from both the elder Lincolns, Abe bade them good-bye, and struck out into the world on his own account.

His first venture was toward river navigation—shipping goods downstream, and thus making use of the natural highways. As there were almost no roads, he saw that the rivers were the only means of communication. The Sangamon River, which flowed by their farm, was cluttered up with driftwood; but Abe saw that if it were cleared, it would open up the whole interior of the state. Just about this time the candidate for some state office came through the country, stump-speaking, and he

talked about this very thing, the opening up of the rivers. When he got through, one of Abe's friends declared loudly that Abe Lincoln could make a better speech than that.

"Speech!—Abe Lincoln!—Speech!" the crowd shouted; and the candidate had perforce to second the invitation.

The big, ungainly young man shambled forward, and a grin went around the crowd. They were going to have some fun. But before Abe had said a dozen sentences they stopped smiling and sat up to listen. It was his first speech in public on a public question, but it caught the crowd. They cheered him to the echo.

The campaigner came forward and grasped his hand warmly. "You made a better speech than I did, young fellow!" he was a big enough man to say.

Not long afterward, a man named Denton Offutt began making preparations to ship a boatload of stuff by river, from a point near Springfield to New Orleans. He asked Abe and two other young men to take charge of the trip, and they willingly consented. They agreed to meet Offutt in Springfield in the

spring of 1831, and they did so after making a toilsome trip through the flooded country.

"Sorry, fellows," he greeted them, as the mud-bespattered trio presented themselves at his door, "but I haven't been able to buy a boat."

That seemed to quash matters, but only for a moment. "Why not build it ourselves?" Abe inquired.

"Can you fellows do it?"

"Sure!" they agreed heartily.

"Then get busy," returned Offutt. "I'll pay you twelve dollars a month apiece, while she is being built."

It was work with which all three were familiar, and soon the woodland near Springfield resounded with the noise of their axes and saws. Abe's knowledge of carpentry stood him in good stead; and in a few weeks' time the boat was ready to launch. It was a clumsy craft, with a rude shelter-house at one end, and its total length was about forty feet. But it looked staunch, and would hold "a raft of stuff."

The boat, being a new venture for that part of the country, was the talk of the day, and

people gathered for miles around to see it start off. The port of departure was a village called New Salem. The craft had been loaded with hogs, pork in barrels, corn, and other produce, and must have looked like a Noah's Ark; but it floated and as the three young men worked the sweeps, away it went down the current, amid the cheers and jocular remarks of the spectators. But alas! in attempting to pass a mill-dam the boat stuck, and started settling at the stern. Water poured in until it began to look like a shipwreck.

The crowd was particularly diverted at the antics of an extremely tall deckhand, whose trousers were rolled up "about five feet" and who began to direct operations. He first instructed that some of the cargo be carried ashore, and set the example with long strides through the water. Then as the boat slowly raised at one end, he took an auger and bored a hole in the bottom to let the water out. It was the first time anybody had seen a boat baled in that fashion, and their jests turned to cheers.

"That's a mighty smart chap!" they said. "He'll get there!"

And he did—if New Orleans was what they

meant—for Abe and his friends reloaded their boat below the dam, and finally reached their destination without further mishap.

The month which they spent in the busy Southern port was rich in experiences. In those days people flocked to New Orleans from all parts of the world. There were Indians, Creoles, Spaniards, Mexicans, Frenchmen, freebooters, adventurers, slaves, and the Southern plantation-owners and merchants, all jostling elbows together through the busy streets. So many flatboats were tied up at the wharves, that, it was said, one could walk a mile or more over their tops.

The slave market was the trading center of the town—a sort of stock exchange. Here black men, women and children were daily offered for sale. The sight of this traffic sickened the heart of Abe Lincoln. Turning to his cousin, John Hanks, he said:

"If ever I get a chance to hit that thing, I'll hit it hard!"

The three young men came back North by steamer, and Offutt was much pleased with their venture. He offered Abe a place in his general store in New Salem, which was

accepted. The townspeople welcomed him. They recognized him as the young fellow who, with his trousers rolled up about five feet, had saved the cargo that day on the dam. They soon discovered for themselves his fund of humor and story-telling proclivities. Offutt was so proud of his clerk that he openly boasted that Abe was "the cleverest and strongest fellow in that part of the country." This boast reached the ears of a wild outfit known as the Clary Grove Boys. Their headquarters was a grove a few miles away from New Salem, and their deeds of terrorism were familiar to more than one hamlet. They were the forerunners of our gangsters of the present day.

One day the Clary Grove gang came to town and openly challenged Abe Lincoln to a wrestling match with Jack Armstrong, their leader. Abe was not very keen for the contest, but could not very well refuse. Egged on by the crowd, a ring was made in an open spot in front of Offutt's store. Armstrong was a big, heavy-set fellow, and the crowd expected him to make short work of this tall grocery clerk, whose arms hung down like flails. But Lin-

coln did not have an ounce of superfluous flesh. He was all bone, sinew, and muscle. He wrapped his arms and legs around his opponent in a regular bear hug. Jack saw that he was getting the worst of it, so tried to break away by a foul. Abe had been in a good humor up to this point, but now lost his temper. Holding Jack at arm's length, he shook him as a terrier would a rat, until his teeth rattled. The gang rushed to their leader's assistance, and it looked for awhile like a free-for-all fight. But Armstrong stopped the others, and held out his hand to Lincoln.

"You beat me fair and square, young feller!" he said, "and I'm for you. You're the best feller that ever broke into camp!"

Armstrong later became one of Lincoln's staunchest friends.

VII

A START IN PUBLIC LIFE

Many stories cluster about Lincoln's name in these New Salem days. Indeed, about no other person in history have so many tales been told. It was at this time that he won his nickname of "Honest Abe," which stuck to him all through life. He was so careful not to cheat a customer, that it became a standing joke. One evening a woman who lived several miles away came into the store to make a few purchases. After she had gone, Abe found that he had overcharged her by six cents. That night he walked out to her house to return her money.

His duties at the store were not enough to take all his time; so he looked around for something more to study. He talked it over with the schoolmaster, who suggested that he take up English Grammar.

"You talk pretty well on your feet, Abe,"

Mr. Graham said, "but you make a lot of mistakes in speech."

"I reckon I do," admitted Abe; "but I can unlearn 'em, can't I?"

"Yes," said the teacher. "Here's a book on English Grammar. Study it thoroughly, and when you come to a tight place, I will help you."

Abe needed no second invitation but took that book home and made its contents his own. How thoroughly he did it is proved by the masterly simplicity of his "Gettysburg Address" and other documents of later life.

"That was easy," he told the astonished Graham, a few weeks later. "If that's a science, I guess I'll tackle another."

Encouraged by his friends, he decided to enter state politics, and announce himself as a candidate for State Legislature. Already we can see in which direction his ambitions lay. And with his characteristic directness he went straight after the thing he wanted. But just at this time another diversion occurred which promised to be more exciting.

One morning in April, 1832, a rider dashed through the streets of New Salem, scattering

handbills issued by the Governor. It was a call for volunteers to repel an invasion of the Sac Indians, led by a famous chief, Black Hawk. The Black Hawk War, as it came to be known, was the last Indian disturbance in that section of the country. It was put down without much bloodshed; but for a time it threatened to be serious.

The young men around New Salem promptly began drilling, and among them were many of Jack Armstrong's gang. Jack and Abe Lincoln had become good friends. When the company was formed, they chose Abe as captain. It was a surprise to him, and he afterwards declared that nothing in his life ever pleased him more.

As a matter of fact, his company saw no actual fighting. The Indians had either been disposed of before his men got there, or else retreated without giving battle—as Indians have a way of doing. The militia saw plenty of the hardships of campaigning, with little excitement to relieve it. After two or three months of fruitless chasing around the country, the militia disbanded. Lincoln's horse was stolen from him, when he was up in Michi-

gan territory, about two hundred miles from home, and he had to find his way back as best he could, partly on foot, partly by paddling down the streams.

While his military life brought him no glory, it was another link in the chain of experience. It taught him leadership of men.

As soon as he got back from the Indian war, he picked up his campaign for State Legislature at the very point where he had dropped it. He began making stump speeches—some of which were literally so—and he entered into the give-and-take of those rough political times with gusto. The candidate for public office must be as rough and ready as his crowd. His speeches were liable to be interrupted at any point by questions or heckling; and if he was not quick at repartee, he stood no chance with the crowd. Sometimes there were free-for-all fights between the candidate's friends and the other side.

On one occasion, it is related that Lincoln was in the midst of a fiery plea for the improvement of their rivers, when he noticed one of his followers getting the worst of it in the

throng. Abe jumped down from the wagon, on which he was speaking, grabbed the other fellow by the trousers and coat collar and threw him "about twelve feet away." Then he calmly climbed back into the wagon and resumed his speech as readily as if he had only stopped for the usual glass of water of some orators.

Lincoln was not elected this time; but out of the three hundred votes cast in and around New Salem, he got two hundred and seventy-seven—surely a fine record for a young, untried man who only two years before had come driving an ox-team into the town, his sole possessions being a much-worn jeans suit and an ax.

Undaunted by the result of the election, Abe went back to his natural forte, storekeeping. He and another young man, William Berry, started a general store, having bought out two rivals. Although they thus cornered the trade of the town, there were many dull hours, when Abe had the chance to follow up his passion for reading. Like all general stores, theirs was accustomed to trad-

ing, or swapping one commodity for another. This did him at least one good turn, as he himself afterwards related:

"One day a man who was migrating to the West drove up in front of my store with a wagon which contained his family and household plunder. He asked me if I would buy an old barrel for which he had no room in his wagon, and which he said contained nothing of special value. I did not want it, but to oblige him I bought it, and paid him, I think, half a dollar for it. Without further examination I put it away in the store, and forgot all about it. Some time after, in overhauling things, I came upon the barrel, and emptying it upon the floor to see what it contained, I found at the bottom of the rubbish a complete edition of Blackstone's 'Commentaries.' I began to read those famous works, and I had plenty of time; for during the long summer days, when the farmers were busy with their crops, my customers were few and far between. The more I read the more intensely interested I became. Never in my whole life was my mind so thoroughly absorbed. I read until I devoured them."

This was Lincoln's first grounding in the study of law. So absorbed was he that he often forgot his other duties. One day a farmer drove up to the store to make a trade, and watched with much interest the lank figure of Abe sprawled out on the ground in the shade of a tree. As the shadow shifted, Abe rolled over a little, automatically, to keep inside of it. But his eyes remained glued to the book. The farmer watched him for some time, then spat tobacco juice at a blue-bottle fly on the ground, and broke the silence.

"What you readin'?"

"Ain't readin'; I'm studyin'," replied Abe, without looking up.

"What you studyin'?"

"Law," answered the prostrate figure.

"Gosh a-mighty!" was the disgusted response.

It is not surprising that, with Abe immersed in law, and his partner Berry being a drinking man, the store should not succeed. It failed, leaving Lincoln saddled with debt, which he was some years in paying. But he never sought to evade any part of it, although a portion of it, relating to the two rival stores

which had been purchased, was not justly his.

Just at this time an entirely new line of work—surveying—was offered him. He had not studied this subject, but went at it so eagerly that in six weeks he was able to handle a transit and level with the best of them. As the country was becoming developed, the official surveyor, John Calhoun, was swamped with work, and was glad to employ Abe as his assistant.

His work of surveying forms an interesting parallel to George Washington's first work; and doubtless Lincoln recalled the fact when he thought over the life-story told in the beloved book by Parson Weems, which had so fired his dreams in boyhood. The other boy surveyor had finally come to the White House. Why not he?

As though in line for this ambition, he announced himself again a candidate for the Illinois State Legislature, when the next election rolled around, in 1834. And this time he was elected.

VIII

LINCOLN THE LAWYER

"Abe, why don't you try for the bar?"

The question was asked by Major Stuart, one of his friends of the Black Hawk War. Stuart had heard of his reading Blackstone, and, himself a rising young lawyer of Springfield, was willing to help him.

"Do you think I could do it?" asked Abe, with a gleam in his eyes. The practice of law had been looming up of late as the one great thing in life.

"Of course you can do it!" replied his friend. "I'll lend you books, and get back of you."

It was a noble offer, and the Major was as good as his word. New Salem was twenty miles from Springfield, but the young surveyor walked back and forth two or three times a week—and always with a law volume held out in front of his nose. They tell yet of seeing the tall young fellow striding by, seeing noth-

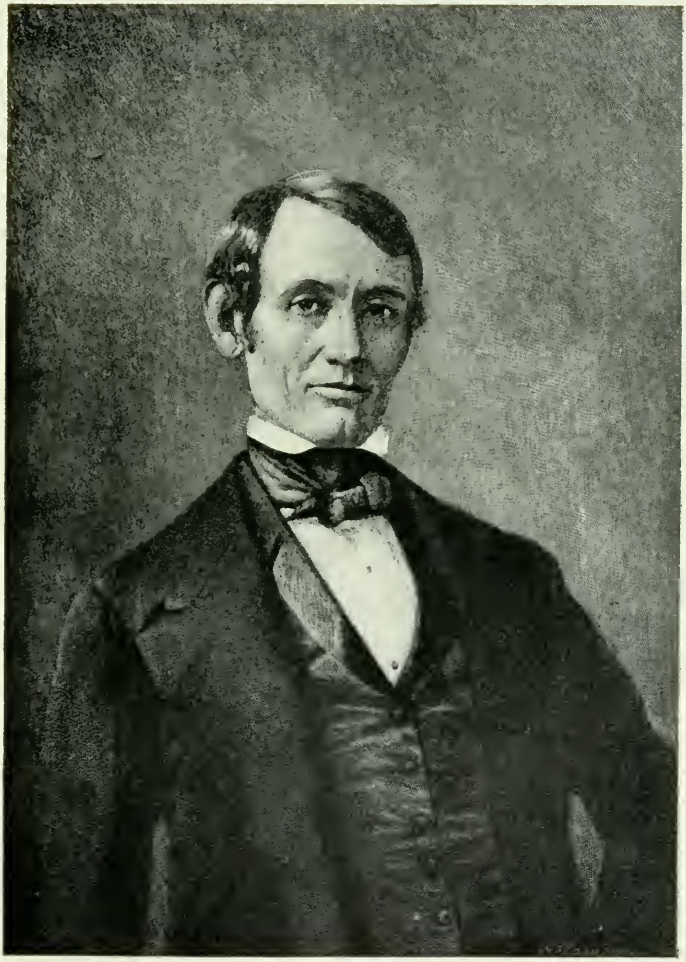
ing but his law book, and as like as not reading its text aloud.

Another job that he worked in with his surveying at this time was that of village postmaster. Many of the letters he carried in his hat.

It was not long before his neighbors began to give him small legal jobs, such as drawing up contracts, making wills, witnessing signatures, and the like, for some of which he obtained modest fees, and for others nothing—unless it was their vote at the next election!

His stick-to-itiveness again had its reward. In 1836, when he was twenty-seven, he was admitted to the bar of the State. He had already served one term of three months in the Legislature, and had been reëlected. With this public service, his surveying, his post office, and his studies, he had hardly allowed the grass to grow under his feet. Now he felt that he must burn some of his bridges behind him, and remove to Springfield.

It meant a good deal to him. He had lived in the little town six years, and knew every man, woman, child, and dog in the community. His living, though scanty, was assured. If



LINCOLN AS A LAWYER
From a dagnerreotype owned by Robert T. Lincoln

he moved to the larger place, where he was unknown, he might starve to death, waiting for a law practice.

There was another personal reason why he was willing to leave his home town. It was the tragedy of his first love affair.

A few years before, Abe had met the daughter of the local innkeeper, a lovely girl, Ann Rutledge by name. Between the two had sprung up a warm friendship, which on his part had ripened into love. But Ann became engaged to another man, named McNeill, who went East soon after to seek his fortune. At first McNeill wrote frequently; then his letters became fewer, and finally ceased altogether.

After an interval, Lincoln felt free to confess his own love, but the distressed girl would not at first listen to him. She still believed in the absent lover. Later she agreed to give Lincoln an answer and, it is believed, promised to marry him. But before they could plan for their wedding day, her health began to fail. Day by day he beheld her growing paler and more listless under that dread disease, consumption, or "lung fever," as it was then called. In August, 1835, she passed away.

Lincoln was like a man dazed. For days he wandered about, scarcely speaking to any one. He had idolized Ann, and his whole future had been centered around her. It was years before he could bear to hear her name spoken. As a boy he had been subject to spells of moodiness; and this grief gave his mind that curious tinge of melancholy which was noticeable throughout his life.

It was with a heavy heart that he packed his few belongings into a pair of saddle-bags slung across the back of a hired horse, told his New Salem neighbors good-bye, and rode away. Luckily he found a good friend, the day he reached Springfield, in James Speed, a storekeeper about his own age.

"Don't board out," he advised Lincoln. "Get you a room somewhere, furnish it yourself, and cook your own meals."

"But where can I get it?" asked Abe.

"Right here over my store," answered Speed. "I've got a big room that we can fix up together."

Lincoln threw one long leg over the horse, dismounted, took his saddle-bags, and strode after Speed upstairs to the room in question.

Then he cast the bags down upon the floor.

"Well, Speed, I'm moved!" he said.

Another friend in need was Major John T. Stuart, of whom we have already spoken. Stuart had believed in Lincoln ever since the Indian campaign, and now invited him to enter his law office as a partner. It was a wonderful chance, because Stuart already had a practice and influence, also social position and polish,—all of which Lincoln lacked.

And now a new career opened up for him. Gone were his backwoods days—his rail-splitting, his store-keeping, his surveying. He had got his feet at last upon the bottom rung of the ladder that was to lead him up into nation-wide prominence. Of course, it was still many years off. There were days and weeks of struggle ahead of him yet—months when he wondered if he was ever going to get out of debt and stand as a man among men. But he never swerved from his work.

At first only small cases came to him, but little by little he began to get a reputation as a first-class pleader, a man who could win juries. He had it in his favor that he understood men, and he would talk to the twelve

men picked at random for the jury box, just as he formerly argued things out with the folks who came into his store to trade. He used words that they could understand, and he saw to it that the opposing counsel never confused the issue. Nothing would arouse his ire more than for the other side to misrepresent or confuse the facts. Jumping to his full height, towering over everybody else in the room, he would shout:

"Your Honor, that ain't so—and I can prove it!"

He would never take a case in which he did not believe himself, and for this reason, as well as his sincerity, he usually won.

There are literally hundreds of stories told of those years of law practice, which lasted for a quarter of a century—from 1836 to 1860. Books have been made up of these anecdotes, and they are interesting reading indeed. Very often they have their element of humor, for Lincoln dearly loved a joke. Again they were dramatic or unexpected. One story is connected with Jack Armstrong, the bully whom Lincoln thrashed, and who became his friend.

Years afterward, Jack's son, growing up to

manhood, got into a fight one evening and was accused of the murder of a man. The mother came pleading with Lincoln to save her son from the gallows. Lincoln was "up to his neck" in public affairs at that time, but he could not turn a deaf ear to such a plea.

The evidence, as summed up, was damaging. One witness in particular swore that he had seen the boy strike the fatal blow, "by the light of the moon." Under cross-examination, he stuck to this point that he could see him clearly by the moonlight.

In Lincoln's closing plea he dwelt on his own friendship for the boy's family, and how they had befriended him when he was poor and needed help. He said that the prisoner was his mother's only support now, and that nothing serious had been charged against him hitherto except that he was a little wild.

"Now, gentlemen of the jury," he concluded, "you are asked to hang this poor boy—to bring down his mother's gray hairs in sorrow to the grave—because a witness has testified that he saw him strike the fatal blow—*by the light of the moon.* Gentlemen" (here Lincoln suddenly pulled an almanac out of his pocket)

"I have looked up the moon's phases, on the fatal night—and there was no moon!"

The prisoner was freed, and when the mother, now weeping tears of joy, asked Lincoln what was his fee, he replied:

"Nothing at all. It has been a great joy to me to repay some of your kindness in my own early days."

Hardworking though he was, Lincoln never made much money in the practice of law. Many of his clients were poor, and he never could be persuaded to charge large fees. If his sympathies were aroused, he would work just as hard on a hundred-dollar case, as though it were a million. Once a widow came to him, asking him to bring an action for damages against the railroad company for killing her cow. The company heard of this suit and sent their agent to Lincoln with a counter-proposition. They offered him five hundred dollars, a large sum for those days, if he would defend the company. They felt that it would be a bad precedent to set, if the company were sued every time a stray cow was killed.

"But I have already promised the widow to take her case," said Lincoln.

"Tell her you've reconsidered. Even if she wins, she can't possibly pay you any such fee as this"—shoving a check for five hundred dollars in front of Lincoln.

"No!" exclaimed the young lawyer. "I can't go back on my word. I'll take her case, and I'll win it!"

And he did.

So successful was he as a pleader before the bar, that his winning of cases became proverbial. His droll turns of wit and his knowledge of human nature—to say nothing of his ability to get the legal aspect of the case—made him a tower of strength to his clients. But he never rested on his reputation. His boyhood habit of reading far into the night was still kept up.

In 1855, twenty years after he had begun to read law, and his reputation was state-wide, he was called to Cincinnati to assist in a celebrated lawsuit. The McCormick Harvester Company was suing another company for an infringement of patent, and some of the ablest lawyers in the country had been retained on the case. That Lincoln was chosen was in itself a compliment; but when he presented himself in Cincinnati, with his somewhat uncouth out-

fit, the dapper Eastern lawyers would have none of him. They did not reject his services utterly, but they kept him in the background, and did not permit him to speak in court. One of these lawyers, Edwin M. Stanton, was, a few years later, selected by Lincoln for the post of Secretary of War in his Cabinet—which shows, if nothing else, that Lincoln was too big a man to harbor a grudge. He could recognize ability, and he saw in this first "big" case that these polished Easterners had several things which he lacked. After the case was settled, he remarked to a friend:

"I'm going home to study law."

"Why, Mr. Lincoln," remonstrated the other. "What are you talking about? You are at the head of the Illinois bar now."

"Yes, but that's as far as I'll ever get, unless I study up law, and can meet these Eastern chaps on their own ground. I'll go back and study some more, I reckon—and one of these fine days I'll be ready for them!"

IX

LINCOLN THE LEGISLATOR

Lincoln was elected to the State Legislature in 1834—when he was twenty-five—and was reëlected for other terms of about three months each. The capital at that time was Vandalia, in the southern part of the state; and as the central and northern sections began to be built up, there were loud complaints from the lawmakers at having to travel so far.

Springfield, in Sangamon County, was centrally located, and while it lacked communications and was still only a small town, it presented some natural advantages as a future capital. So, at least, thought Lincoln and the other men elected from Sangamon County. There were nine of them in all,—every man Jack of them over six feet tall and weighing about two hundred pounds. They came to be known as the "Long Nine," and they rushed the Springfield capital project like a husky

football team. They finally won, and the chief credit fell to the longest, lankiest member of the team, Abe Lincoln.

When he came up for reëlection in 1836 there was a lively campaign. Like every other lawgiver, his past record came up for attack. He had already taken his stand on such burning questions as slavery and abolition. No matter whether folks agreed with him or not, they knew where to find him.

One day, after making a red-hot speech, a man in the crowd, named Forquer, undertook to take him down a peg. Forquer was himself an able man, gifted with a sarcastic tongue, but had been a political turncoat, and, it was whispered, always looked out for his own pocket—like some politicians of the present day. Forquer had recently decorated his house with a lightning-rod, then a novelty in that part of the country.

After "skinning Abe alive," as he thought, in a lively speech, Forquer sat down. Then Lincoln took the stand again, refuting his arguments and ending:

"The gentleman commenced his speech by saying that I would have to be taken down,

and he was sorry the task devolved upon him. I am not so young in years as I am in the tricks and trade of a politician; but live long or die young, I would rather die now than, like the gentleman, change my politics and, simultaneously with the change, receive an office worth three thousand dollars a year, and then have to erect a lightning-rod over my house to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God!"

This brought such shouts of laughter from the delighted crowd, that it was not hard to find the man who had been "taken down."

His ability to divert ridicule from himself and on to the shoulders of the other fellow was a tremendous asset with him always; but on one occasion he went a little too far. He had aroused the political enmity of a pompous man named Shields, and could not resist satirizing him in a letter to the local paper, signed "Aunt Rebecca." The incident might have ended there, had not a young lady in whom Lincoln was specially interested—Mary Todd—taken it up. Mary and a girl friend wrote other letters about Shields, over the same "Aunt Rebecca" signature.

Shields, in a towering rage, sought the editor

of the paper and demanded the writer's name. When the editor reported this to Lincoln, he answered: "Keep the young ladies' names out of this. Tell him I did it."

A challenge to a duel was immediately forthcoming, and Lincoln was perplexed. He did not believe in duels, but he did not see a way to avoid this one. It was his privilege to choose the weapons, so he chose cavalry broadswords of the largest size. Shields had, perforce, to accept, although he was a thickset man, about half as tall as Lincoln.

They chose seconds and met for the duel at the spot agreed upon. Lincoln looked serious, and waved his big weapon around in the air, to test it, in a careless sort of way. Shields didn't like the looks of things, but was brave enough to stand his ground. Finally, as a last flourish, Abe reached up and clipped a twig off a tree-branch, seemingly about ten feet above his head. It was so far out of the reach of everybody else present, that the seconds could not restrain their laughter. Just then a boatload of friends of both parties pulled up hastily, and by their efforts peace was restored. But Lincoln never forgot the lesson of his one duel,

and was exceedingly careful thereafter how he trod on others' pet corns.

In 1840 he had refused reëlection to the Legislature, thinking that it was time for him to stand for a higher office. He wanted to go to United States Congress, and announced himself as a Whig candidate. But he was defeated for the nomination. Two of his friends and legal associates, Hardin and Baker, were also candidates, and Lincoln felt that he could not fight them. Hardin was chosen; and Lincoln then did an unprecedented thing by moving that Baker be listed as the choice of the convention two years hence. This was quickly done, and thus made it impossible for Hardin to succeed himself. Baker consequently was chosen in 1844. When his term was up, in 1846, Lincoln again announced his own candidacy, and the others evidently thought that "turn about was fair play," for they elected him by a rousing majority.

Meanwhile, in 1844, he was made a presidential elector, in the candidacy of Henry Clay. Lincoln had been a lifelong admirer of the famous Kentucky orator and statesman, and now stumped Illinois with enthusiasm, in

his behalf. He also went over into Indiana, and on one occasion spoke in his old home town of Gentryville. As the friends and neighbors of his boyhood clustered around his buckboard and clasped his hand, he was so deeply stirred that for several minutes he could not utter a word.

Lincoln had been spurred on to higher political ambitions by the same young woman who had been partially the cause of his duel. Mary Todd was a Kentucky girl, lively and vivacious and fond of society. She had been much sought after, but had seemed to prefer the society of the tall, awkward lawyer, to other more polished swains. She looked beyond his crude exterior, and openly predicted a brilliant future for him. They became engaged to be married, but for a time the engagement was broken off. Lincoln was afraid that there was too great disparity between them. She had had many social advantages that he had been denied. He was utterly miserable, after he made this decision. His old brooding melancholy seized him again. He found that he could not be happy without her; and their disagreement was patched up, after a few

MRS. LINCOLN
From a rare daguerreotype

months. They were quietly married, November 4, 1842, and two years later they bought a house in Springfield.

The young wife supplied just the added inspiration that Lincoln needed at this time. She coached him in social etiquette, made him get clothes of more fashionable cut, and in many little ways groomed him for the larger public life just ahead. When he finally removed to Washington, in 1847, to take his seat in Congress, he had acquired much of that dignity and poise for which he was so marked in later years.

Lincoln's term in Congress was limited to two years, and he was not reëlected. He had not made himself popular enough with his constituents. For one thing, he had taken a stand against the Mexican War, declaring that the United States was the aggressor and in the wrong. Of course, such a stand was decidedly unpopular, but Lincoln would not truckle, or hide his sentiments, as a weaker man would have done. Then, at the conclusion of the war, when Texas and the larger territory to the north was added to the Union, Lincoln aroused still wider enmity by declaring that it

should all be free—that is, that no more slave-holding states should be admitted. It was a dangerous question, which wrecked more than one political career, and, seemingly, Lincoln's among them. But we shall see that it later gave him his national opportunity.

Now, his tenure of office over, he returned home cheerfully, and took up again the practice of law.

X

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES

Back during the days when Lincoln was a raw young legislator, in Vandalia, Illinois, he met another young fellow just earning his spurs in politics. His name was Stephen A. Douglas. Stephen was short, and Abraham tall, but Stephen was no mean antagonist in any contest, as Abraham soon discovered. The two learned early to respect each other, though they never became close friends.

Douglas came of better social stock than Lincoln, and had been given more advantages. His star rose steadily and rapidly, and bade fair to eclipse that of Lincoln totally. By the time the latter had served one brief term in Congress and gone back to retirement, Douglas was senior Senator from Illinois and a figure of national prominence. It was openly predicted that he would one day be president. His friends called him the "Little Giant."

If there was any envy in Lincoln's breast at this turn of fortune's wheel, he did not show it. He threw his whole energies back into the practice of law, and so interested did he become that it is likely, if he had been offered a local or state office, he would have declined it. For five years he thus worked, his law partner being at this time Herndon, of Springfield. The firm achieved a reputation that was statewide.

But just then something happened which threw Lincoln neck-and-crop back into national politics—and this time "for keeps."

A bill was introduced into Congress to repeal the Missouri Compromise. This Compromise was an agreement which the people of the United States had entered into some thirty years before, and which provided that all states above a certain latitude should be "free" states—that is, no slave-holding should be allowed in them. Now with the admission of other Western states north of Missouri, efforts were being made to break down this agreement, and leave it to the new states themselves to determine whether their citizens should own slaves, or not.

Douglas was a member of the committee at Washington, which prepared bills for the admission of Kansas and Nebraska. With his eye to a future nomination for President, he sought to curry favor with the South by tacking on an amendment to the above effect.

"This is right," he said; "it is what is meant by States' Rights. Let the states themselves decide."

But if his move made friends in the South, it made enemies in the North. A roar of protest went up, and the clamor was by no means least in his home state, Illinois. Douglas found it advisable to hasten home and "mend his fences."

Lincoln was one whom the proposed repeal of the Missouri Compromise had worked up to fever heat. We have already seen how he hated slavery, ever since that far-off day in New Orleans when he promised himself to hit it hard, if he ever got the chance. This seemed one of the chances, and as he rode back and forth over his circuit, visiting one court after another, he expressed himself vehemently whenever he could find a listener. One of his friends tells of seeing him sitting on the edge

of his bed in the early morning, clad only in a long white nightshirt.

"I tell you," Lincoln broke out when he saw that his friend was awake, "I tell you that this country cannot exist much longer, half slave and half free."

"Oh, go back to sleep, Abe," was the reply.

But Lincoln refused to go back to sleep now —in the political sense. He was thoroughly awake. Meanwhile, Douglas was having a hard time of it. He tried to speak in Chicago, and they howled him down. He argued half the night with them. It was a new experience for the Little Giant, whose persuasive tongue had long since won him the esteem of men.

Be it said to Douglas's credit that he was no coward. He went on a speech-making tour of the state and won a respectful if not altogether successful hearing. Men's minds were still divided on this vexed subject of slavery—as they had been ever since the United States had become a nation; for the Constitution had remained silent on the question.

In October, of the memorable year 1854, Douglas came to Springfield.

"Why," he argued, "shall we try to impose

our wills upon the people of Kansas and Nebraska? Why not give them the same privileges that other states have enjoyed—to make their own laws and mind their own affairs?"

It was the time of the annual state fair, and crowds from the surrounding country had flocked in. Lincoln had been chosen to answer him, and the gist of his argument was:

"I admit that the emigrant to Kansas and Nebraska is competent to govern himself; but I deny his right to govern any other person without that person's consent." And he went on to say: "What my opponent means is, if you do not object to my taking my hog to Nebraska, therefore I must not object to your taking your slave. I admit this is perfectly logical—if there is no difference between hogs and negroes!"

Lincoln spoke for three hours on this momentous occasion, and it is regarded as one of the most important speeches of his whole career. It was, in effect, the throwing of his glove into the political arena.

Douglas sat in the front row of the crowd, with folded arms, and was visibly perturbed as the speaker drove home one argument after

another, with long sweeps of his arms, as though he were splitting rails. When the speech was over, he came up and congratulated Lincoln, with perhaps just a trace of patronage in his manner.

"Lincoln, you know a lot more about this subject than I gave you credit for," he said. "You are giving me more trouble than the whole United States Senate."

Douglas realized this fact even more keenly a few days later. They met again at Peoria, and again Lincoln's "terrible earnestness" mingled with his sudden flashes of humor, caught the crowd. Douglas had remarked in his speech, "The Whigs are all dead."

After he sat down, Lincoln did not immediately get up, but sat still for a few moments with face averted. Finally he arose and drawled: "Mr. Douglas remarked awhile ago that the Whigs are all dead. If this be so, fellow-citizens, you will now experience the novelty of hearing a speech from a dead man; and I suppose you might properly say, in the language of the old hymn:

" 'Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound!' "

The audience fairly howled with delight at this thrust; and from the start of his speech Lincoln held their close attention. Douglas saw defeat staring him in the face, if this sort of thing was to go on.

"Let's call it quits, Lincoln," he said. And for the time being they called the debates off. But the honors for the first round rested with the rail-splitter.

The next few months saw politics at a fever heat throughout the nation. Slavery had come to be the one and only political issue. Douglas found that he could not keep out of it, and neither could Lincoln. The latter worked like a beaver to line up the Whigs solidly on the question, and as it did not seem possible, a new party was formed, called the Republican Party. This was in May, 1856, and Lincoln was one of its founders. Again he made a great speech—so earnest, so magnetic, so impelling, that at its close the audience rose as one person, cheering like crazy men. The reporters down at the press tables threw aside their pencils before the speech was half done, and entirely forgot their tasks in the general tumult. For this reason, no notes were ever

preserved of this effort, and it has gone down to history as "Lincoln's Lost Speech." One of the reporters afterwards declared: "If Mr. Lincoln was six feet four inches high, usually, at Bloomington that day he was seven feet high, and inspired at that!"

But while the actual words of this famous speech were lost, its message burned its way into the hearts of its hearers. Lincoln was recognized as one of the standard-bearers of the new party. At its first national convention, that year, he was nominated for Vice-President, and received one hundred and ten votes.

While the new party did not make much headway on its own account, that first year, it did accomplish a good deal in the way of house-cleaning. It carried the Illinois elections, and for the first time in his political career Douglas received a crushing defeat.

Douglas himself did not come up for re-election to the Senate until two years later, and this time he could not avoid further debate with Lincoln, because the latter had been nominated as the candidate to oppose him. Seven debates were arranged for, in this cam-

paign, and Douglas entered them in somewhat bad grace. He had won nation-wide fame as one of the most skillful debaters in the United States Senate, but somehow or other he had not seemed to get along very well with his home people, since Abraham Lincoln had got into the fight.

The two men were well matched as speakers, but were utterly dissimilar in their methods. Douglas was a foot shorter than Lincoln, a trifle stout, but attractive of face, voice, and manner. His voice had a pleasing quality which won his hearers. He cleverly avoided direct issues wherever possible, and was for compromise. His last speech in the Senate, which had won him many friends both North and South, concluded with these words:

"If Kansas wants a slave-constitution, she has a right to it; if she wants a free-state constitution, she has a right to it. It is none of my business which way the slavery clause is decided. I care not whether it is voted up or down!"

Lincoln, on the contrary, was blunt in his speech, and went straight to the point. He had stated his political creed a short while be-

fore, in a speech which many of his friends had urged him to omit or tone down, as they said it would kill him politically. He had said:

"'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new—North as well as South."

It was because of this speech and others like it, that the Southern states came to regard Lincoln as their bitterest foe—a man to be defeated at any cost. Therefore, the coming contest between him and Douglas for a seat in the Senate attracted national interest. Large crowds came to hear the debates, and newspapers all over the country reported them.

At first Douglas adopted a condescending attitude toward Lincoln, as much as to intimate that it was an honor for a famous Senator to debate with him at all.

"Why, I knew Lincoln twenty years ago here in the State Legislature," he said. "He means well, but what has he ever done? You folks sent him to Congress for two years, but he couldn't get reëlected."

Lincoln came back at him by charging that he was trying to carry water on both shoulders —to please both the North and the South. And to prove this, Lincoln propounded a series of questions which did, in fact, get the wily Little Giant into a tight corner. He could not answer them directly without offending one side or the other. He "side-stepped" most of them, but on the whole leaned toward the North in his answers.

So clever was Douglas that, despite the fact that Lincoln had the better of the arguments, Douglas retained his seat in the Senate. He was chosen by the State Legislature, instead of by the voters direct, for they esteemed him the "safer man." He was still in line for the

presidency, while Lincoln was feared as a radical. Lincoln went back home again to resume the practice of law.

When a friend asked him how he felt over the election, he said he felt like the overgrown boy who had stubbed his toe.

"It hurt too bad to laugh, and he was too big to cry!"

XI

THE "RAIL-SPLITTER" IS NOMINATED FOR PRESIDENT

While on the face of it Lincoln was beaten in his debates with Senator Douglas, keen observers who looked beneath the surface thought differently.

"Watch that man!" they said, indicating the tall form of the Springfield lawyer. "The country will hear from him yet."

Others were boasting loudly: "We have two giants here in Illinois—the Little Giant and the Big Giant!"

Folks back East commenced to take notice of affairs in Illinois, and the editors of local newspapers began to receive requests for details regarding this man from Sangamon County, who so ably held his own with Douglas.

"Why, Douglas is one of the best debaters in the Senate," they said. "He has been considered a match for Daniel Webster, Henry

Clay, Charles Sumner, and Robert Hayne. Who is this Abraham Lincoln that has caused him so much trouble?"

Born of these inquiries and the curiosity of Eastern people to get better acquainted with him, Lincoln received an invitation to address a public meeting in Brooklyn. He accepted and made careful preparations for it, although naturally somewhat nervous. When he reached New York, however, he found public interest was so aroused that the meeting had been transferred to Cooper Union, one of the largest auditoriums in the city. This did not tend to make him any more comfortable, but it did arouse his fighting blood.

On the stage and in the audience that night were men of prominence in politics, art, and letters—such men as Horace Greeley, of the *Tribune;* William Cullen Bryant, of the *Post,* and George William Curtis, of *Harpers Magazine.* The whole audience, while friendly, was a critical one; and when the towering, loose-jointed man from the West came forward and was introduced, a quiet smile went around. He might do for the rough-and-ready West, they thought; but for New York,

or Massachusetts—well, that was a different matter.

However, they settled themselves back in their chairs for an evening's entertainment. Lincoln's fame as a story-teller had preceded him. They expected to be amused, at any rate. They were unprepared for what actually happened.

Lincoln began in a low and somewhat hesitating voice. He looked at them earnestly and spoke simply and directly. He did not smile and, wonder of wonders, he did not crack a single joke. He took his text from a remark of Douglas's, on the subject of slavery:

"Our fathers, when they framed the Government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better than we do now."

Douglas had meant to imply that "our fathers" had deliberately written slavery into the law of the land. Lincoln set himself to expose the fallacy of such an argument. He traced out, step by step, the progress of the Constitution in its making and adoption; then spoke in detail of the men who had signed it, and proved by historic fact that a majority of

these men had personally opposed slavery, but had not made an issue of it at the time, because of the difficulty of getting the Constitution ratified at all.

As the speaker warmed to his theme, his awkwardness of manner and hesitation of speech passed away. He was a man transformed. His voice rang out like a trumpet. He cited history fluently and without reference to notes. "No compromise!" was his plea. Let the Republican Party cease to traffic with this evil.

"All they ask we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right," he affirmed. "All we ask they could as readily grant, if they thought it wrong."

Yes, there lay the whole difficulty—the question as to whether slave-holding was right or wrong. He closed with an appeal which was almost a prayer:

"Let us have faith that right makes might; and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

When he had ended, the audience sat for a moment as if spellbound—hypnotized by the tremendous power and earnestness of this man.

Then the hall fairly rocked with applause. Men crowded around the platform to congratulate him. Horace Greeley remarked to a friend that it was one of the finest examples of sustained oratory he had ever heard, or ever expected to hear. He had listened to Webster's famous "Reply to Hayne" in the Senate, but he regarded this speech as greater.

The next day the New York papers were full of this meeting and speech; and Lincoln's face—till then unfamiliar to them—appeared in large display. It was a face which they and the country at large were destined never after to forget.

Lincoln went by invitation to several cities in New England, speaking to large and admiring throngs. They took to him from the first. This Eastern trip undoubtedly paved the way for the nomination for the presidency which was soon to be his.

It goes without saying, that the folks back home were immensely proud of his Eastern success.

"Told you so," they said, when such papers as *Harper's Weekly* came out with Lincoln's picture taking up the entire front page.

Not long thereafter, the State Convention of his party was held at Decatur. It was in May, 1860, and just prior to the National Convention which was to take place at Chicago. Lincoln's friends thought that the latter fact was a strong point in their favor; and that if he won the state nomination, he would get the national. Others, however, argued that Lincoln was too "new" a man—that he wouldn't stand a show against such polished and experienced statesmen as William H. Seward and Salmon P. Chase. It looked as though Lincoln's old rival, Douglas, would get the Democratic nomination, and with the South behind him it would require the strongest candidate that the Republicans could produce, to beat him.

But whatever doubt his friends had, as to the success of the State Convention, was soon swept away. The delegates had no more than settled down to business, when a commotion was heard at the entrance. Everybody turned their heads and craned their necks to see what was up. Down the aisle came a strange procession. It was led by two men, carrying a couple of fence rails on their shoulders. One

of these men was John Hanks, a cousin of Lincoln, and the man who had induced Tom Lincoln to move to Illinois from Indiana. From the rails dangled a banner bearing these words:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN
The Rail Candidate
For President in 1860.
Two rails from a lot of 3,000 made in 1830 by John Hanks and Abe Lincoln—whose father was the first pioneer of Macon County.

This little homely touch was like spark to tinder. The convention—like political conventions will—went wild with enthusiasm, and was easily stampeded to Lincoln. Here was a man who had faced poverty, and who had never been afraid to toil with his hands. During the demonstration Lincoln sat on the stage blushing like a schoolboy. When called on for a speech he merely said, pointing to the banner:

"I suppose I am expected to reply to that. I cannot say whether I made those rails or not, but I am quite sure I have made a great many just as good."

The next week, the National Convention met in Chicago; and you may be sure that Lincoln's friends did not neglect to call the attention of the delegates to the fact that they had a "favorite son." Flags and streamers were hung everywhere with "Vote for the Rail Splitter," "Honest Abe, our Choice," and the like.

An immense building called "The Wigwam," and capable of seating 10,000 people, had been built for the occasion. No sooner had the vast throng been "called to order," than this big political pot began to seethe and bubble and overflow into little groups, each working earnestly for its candidate. To call such a gathering "to order" was a huge joke—but everybody was too busy to see it!

Politics that year was at fever heat. Everybody sensed that the fate of the nation—at any rate, its peace—hinged upon the events of the next few months.

On the first ballot, William H. Seward led, as was expected. He was New York's favorite son, and an able and brilliant man. That he was to serve later with such fine distinction as Secretary of State, the most im-

portant post in Lincoln's Cabinet, indicates the caliber of the man. Lincoln, who was his nearest competitor on this ballot, presented a sharp contrast to his opponent. It was the rough-and-ready West against the cultured East again.

Seward's strength was exhausted on the first ballot. The second showed a decided drift toward the "Rail Splitter." The third ballot decided it. Lincoln had received the required number of votes. An eye-witness, Mr. F. B. Carpenter, gives a graphic picture of this dramatic occasion:

"The scene surpassed description. Men had been stationed upon the roof of the Wigwam to communicate the result of the different ballots to the thousands outside, far outnumbering the packed crowd inside. To these men one of the secretaries shouted, 'Fire the salute! Lincoln is nominated!' Then, as the cheering inside died away, the roar began on the outside and swelled up from the excited masses like the noise of many waters. This the insiders heard, and to it they replied. Thus deep called to deep with such a frenzy of sympathetic enthusiasm that even the thundering

salute of cannon was unheard by many on the platform.

"When the excitement had partly subsided, Mr. Evarts of New York arose, and in appropriate words expressed his grief that Seward had not been nominated. He then moved that the nomination of Abraham Lincoln be made unanimous. Governor John A. Andrews, of Massachusetts, and Hon. Carl Schurz, of Wisconsin, seconded the motion, and it was carried. Then the enthusiasm of the multitude burst out anew. A large banner, prepared by the Pennsylvania delegation, was conspicuously displayed, bearing the inscription, 'Pennsylvania good for twenty thousand majority for the people's candidate, Abe Lincoln.' Delegates tore up the sticks and boards bearing the names of their several states, and waved them aloft over their heads. A brawny man jumped upon the platform and, pulling his coat sleeves up to his elbows, shouted: 'I can't stop! Three times three more cheers for our next President, Abe Lincoln!' A full-length portrait of the candidate was produced upon the platform. Mr. Greeley telegraphed to the New York

Tribune: 'There was never another such scene in America.'

"Chicago went wild. One hundred guns were fired from the top of the Tremont House. At night the city was in a blaze of glory. Bonfires, processions, torchlight, fireworks, illuminations and salutes filled the air with noise and the eye with beauty. 'Honest Old Abe' was the utterance of every man in the streets. The Illinois delegation before it separated 'resolved' that the millennium had come."

The scenes of joy and enthusiasm in Chicago were duplicated in every city and town in Illinois. They had all come to look upon the tall Springfield lawyer as a personal friend. In Springfield the town gave itself up to celebration. A salute of one hundred guns was fired.

Meanwhile, what of "Honest Old Abe" himself? He had not gone to the convention, but remained quietly at home. It is doubtful, however, whether he could transact much business of his own in those trying days. He was talking to a friend in the street, when a boy came dashing up to him with the message that

he was nominated. Lincoln glanced at it, then thrust the paper in his pocket, saying:

"There is a little woman down the street who will be pleased to know about this. I think I will go and tell her."

XII

A RED-HOT ELECTION

The presidential election in that year, 1860, has been spoken of ever since as one of the most exciting events in our nation's history. The hullabaloo which greeted Lincoln's nomination in Chicago was but a foretaste of the days to come. The whole country seemed to be on beam ends. Everybody recognized that now at last they were going to settle the question of slavery, one way or another, forever.

So divided were people's opinions, both North and South, that no less than four parties put out candidates. One was for compromise with the slave states; another was for letting them settle their own affairs; while a third tried to ignore the question of slavery altogether! Only the party which nominated Lincoln came out flat-footedly against slavery. It was him against the field, but the fact that the field was split up added greatly to his chances of election.

Lincoln himself stayed at home, and did no

campaigning other than an occasional speech to some visiting delegation. But his adherents were by no means idle. Prominent men of the North—among them Seward and Chase, who had been defeated by him for the nomination—went campaigning through the country. Clubs, called the "Wide-Awake Boys," were organized in nearly every city and town of the North. One of their specialties was torchlight parades. Those were the days of the dripping kerosene torch, and many a good suit was ruined in the cause! The marches would proceed in a zigzag line in imitation of a rail fence. They would carry fence rails, and banners with pictures of "Honest Abe" and "The Rail-Splitter." In Springfield they held a monster parade in August, with Wide-Awake Clubs from points two hundred or more miles away. They marched past Lincoln's door 75,000 strong—a line eight miles long!

Meanwhile, Douglas, Lincoln's old-time rival, was not idle. He also had been nominated for president by one wing of the Democratic Party, and he traveled through the South speaking eloquently and winning many votes. Down there excitement ran no less

high. "Anything to beat Lincoln!" was the cry. Leaders openly predicted that if Lincoln were elected, the Southern States would withdraw from the Union. Douglas himself did not advocate this. While he preached States' Rights, he still hoped that the Union might be held together by compromise.

Election Day brought the crisis to a head. Lincoln was elected, receiving a total of 1,857,610 votes. Douglas, his nearest rival, received 1,291,574 votes; Breckenridge, 850,082; and Bell, 646,124. Lincoln's electoral vote was 180, while that of the other three combined was 123. But the election had been sectional. Lincoln's votes were all north of the Mason and Dixon's line. Fifteen Southern States gave him no electoral vote; and nine did not give him a single popular vote! It was indeed a house divided against itself. But while the result was disappointing to Lincoln, from this standpoint, it made him all the more determined to hold the Union together at any cost.

"We won't leave the Union, and they shan't!" he declared in one of his speeches.

The thrill of actually being elected President —his boyhood's dream come true—vanished

before the stern realities which he now faced. No sooner was the vote counted, and Lincoln declared elected, than the Southern States made good their threat to secede. South Carolina was the first, withdrawing formally from the Union in December—only a few weeks after the election. Her example was followed by Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. Delegates from these States met at Montgomery, Alabama, and organized the Confederate States of America. They chose Jefferson Davis for President, and Alexander H. Stephens for Vice-President.

Meanwhile, Lincoln could do nothing to prevent this movement. Although elected, he had not yet taken his seat. The retiring President, Buchanan, was unwilling to move on so momentous a question, during his last few weeks in office. Many Northern men, in fact, among whom was Horace Greeley, voiced the opinion that the Southern States were within their rights in seceding. More than once a similar movement had been contemplated by a Northern state, and this policy was one of the chief principles of the Abolitionists. The Constitution itself was silent on the matter. It had

been formed by a voluntary union of *sovereign states.*

So let us not be too harsh in our judgment of the South, in its act of secession.

With Lincoln, however, there could be no halfway measures. He had made his attitude perfectly plain all along. In a letter written at this time, he says:

"My opinion is, that no State can in any way lawfully get out of the Union without the consent of the others; and that it is the duty of the President and other government functionaries to run the machine as it is."

Meanwhile the home of the President-elect was like a besieged fortress. Hundreds came to see him, urging him to do this, that, or the other thing. No two seemed to agree. Thousands of letters and telegrams poured in upon him—some praising him, some blaming him, some threatening him. He held public receptions in the Governor's room, in the Capitol at Springfield. Again he would lock himself in, to work over his inaugural address; or to close up his law practice.

Pointing to the sign hanging over his office door, he said, one day, to Herndon, his partner:

"Let it hang there, won't you? If I live I'm coming back some time, and then we'll go right on practicing law as if nothing had happened."

Herndon gripped his hand. "All right, Lincoln," he said; "I never hope to have another partner like you. That shingle will hang there undisturbed."

Lincoln also paid a visit to his aged stepmother, and their leave-taking was affecting. His father had been dead ten years. He never lived to see his son reach national fame. But Lincoln had never been drawn to his father, who did not understand him, as he was to this second mother, who did. She was immensely proud of her famous son, but also greatly alarmed for his safety. She had heard that there had been threats made against his life—as indeed there had—and she was afraid that she would never see him again.

When Lincoln boarded the train at Springfield on that memorable day in February, 1861, to go to Washington, his friends clustered around his coach for a final handshake and word. His little parting talk to them was almost like a prayer. This is what he said:

"My Friends: No one, not in my situation,

can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

One other incident of his inaugural journey is especially worth calling to mind. Among Lincoln's many correspondents after he was elected president was a little girl named Grace Bedell. Her father was a Republican, her two brothers Democrats, but she followed her father's lead and was an enthusiastic adherent of Lincoln. At that time, as all during his

early manhood, Lincoln was clean-shaven. She studied his pictures during the campaign, and decided in her childish heart that this was the reason why her brothers were against him. If he only had a growth of whiskers, like her father, she was sure that her brothers would vote for him!

So possessed was she with this idea that she wrote him very frankly about it, asking him if he couldn't let his whiskers grow. Then feeling afraid that she had taken the time of a very big and busy man, she ended her letter by saying:

"If you have no time to answer my letter, will you allow your little girl to reply for you?"

Perhaps her scoffing brothers had put doubt into the childish heart. Of course, the president-elect was too busy to write to a little girl! But anxiously she watched the mails for a reply—and sure enough, it came. Her trembling fingers tore open the letter, and this is what it said:

"Springfield, Illinois,
"October 19, 1860.

"My dear little Miss:

"Your very agreeable letter of the fifteenth is received. I regret the necessity of saying I

have no daughter. I have three sons; one seventeen; one nine, and one seven years of age. They, with their mother, constitute the whole family. As to whiskers, having never worn any, do you think people would call it a piece of silly affectation, if I should begin now?

"Your very sincere well-wisher,

"A Lincoln."

It so happened that on the journey to Washington, the train stopped for a few minutes at the town where the little girl lived. Lincoln, with his mind busied with constant speech-making on this trip, and meeting thousands of people, still remembered the incident, and said:

"I have a little correspondent in this place. I would like to meet her."

"What is her name?" inquired the people near by.

"Grace Bedell," he answered.

The crowd began to call, "Grace Bedell! Is Grace Bedell present?"

And soon far back in the rear the throng began to make way for a very timid, but very excited little girl who came forward. And how radiantly happy she was, as she reached

the steps of the President's car, when that great man bent down and took her up in his arms and kissed her blushing cheeks!

"See, my dear," he said. "I have taken your advice and begun to grow a beard!"

At Columbus, after a short speech, such was the delight of the crowd that the President-elect was almost mobbed. An eye witness thus recalls the scene: "People plunged at his arms with frantic enthusiasm, and all the infinite variety of shakes, from the wild and irrepressible pump-handle movement to the dead grip, was executed upon the devoted *dexter* and *sinister* of the President. Some glanced at his face as they grasped his hand; others invoked the blessings of heaven upon him; others with hats crushed over their eyes seized his hands in a convulsive grasp, and passed on as if they had not the remotest idea who, what, or where they were!"

Lincoln stopped at several cities along the way to make short speeches. He urged the preservation of the Union at any cost, but never did he make any bitter remarks against the South. This had been true of his whole campaign. He hated slavery as an institution,

but he never made personal or vindictive attacks.

Nevertheless, threats against his own safety continued, and he yielded to the entreaties of friends and did not go straight through to Washington as planned. A plot against his life had been discovered in Baltimore, so he returned to Philadelphia and entered Washington quietly by another train.

XIII

A CAPTAIN IN A STORM

The new captain of the Ship of State took command during a storm. Or, as Emerson put it, "The new pilot was hurried to the helm in a tornado."

As we have already seen, he faced a divided nation. The Southern Confederacy was an accomplished fact. How should he deal with it? The whole world held its breath and listened to his inaugural message.

That message did not equivocate. It stated in clear, simple words the new President's position. But there still was no rancor or hatred. Lincoln never forgot that he himself was from the South, and he hailed those of the South as brothers, not enemies. But his attitude, while friendly, was firm.

"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. . . . We are

not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic cords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

These were the closing words of an address which was delivered with almost pathetic earnestness. Lincoln was, in fact, pleading with the South. Then Chief Justice Taney stepped forward, and the new President took solemn oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of his country.

Abraham Lincoln was now President of the United States.

Among the first to congratulate him was Senator Douglas. His rival had been one of a small guard of honor who escorted him from the Senate Chamber, and had held Lincoln's hat for him during the inaugural address. Now in the hearty handclasp all differences were forgotten, and Douglas promised—and afterwards gave him—his staunch friendship.

One of Lincoln's first official acts was the selection of his Cabinet. William H. Seward, who had been his closest political rival at Chicago, accepted the post of Secretary of State; Simon Cameron, Secretary of War; Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury; Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy; Caleb B. Smith, Secretary of the Interior; Montgomery Blair, Postmaster General, and Edward Bates, Attorney-General.

These selections did not entirely meet the approval of his party, as they were of different political creeds. But Lincoln replied:

"The times are too grave and perilous for ambitious schemes and personal rivalries. I need the aid of all of these men. They enjoy the confidence of their several States and sections, and they will strengthen the administration."

He was now, as at all times, ready to sink his personal feelings in the question of personal associates, for the larger good. More than one of these men had been rivals, and not always friendly rivals, of his. Seward for a time was openly scornful of Lincoln's ability. He regarded him as a back-country lawyer

with no experience in national affairs. At first, Seward said that he would not take the State portfolio. Later when he reconsidered and accepted, it was in a spirit of condescension to his chief. Not many days after taking office, Seward sent Lincoln a letter entitled, "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration." The tone of this letter was so presumptuous that Lincoln forebore to reply in writing. It, in effect, advised the President to be guided by him, Seward, if he was not to make mistakes. But the next time Seward came into his office Lincoln handed the letter back to its writer quietly, with the comment:

"I guess you didn't mean all of that, Seward."

The Secretary of State recognized, after this interview, that Lincoln was his own master; and served him in the stormy days to come with patriotic zeal.

Lincoln's ability to turn his critics and enemies into devoted friends was constantly illustrated during the next four years of war. It was one of the secrets of his success during the most trying period of the nation's history. To cite only one other of many striking illus-

trations—the personnel of his cabinet was changed, after a few months, to make Edwin M. Stanton Secretary of War. Stanton had been Attorney General in Buchanan's Cabinet, and was one of the most outspoken and scornful of Lincoln's critics. He doubtless still remembered the ungainly lawyer who had been shoved into the background in the Cincinnati law case. The President was well aware of this, but it did not deter him from inviting Stanton to take this highly important position as head of the War Department.

Lincoln knew that Stanton was one of the ablest men he could pick—which was proved by after events—and he never let the fact that Stanton had been hostile to him and had ridiculed him openly, deter him a moment from inviting Stanton to become one of his official family. The offer came as a complete surprise, and Stanton's acceptance was no less surprising.

When asked why he did it, Stanton replied bluntly, "I will help make Abe Lincoln President of the United States."

And he did.

XIV

THE FIRST DAYS OF WAR

Not for long was the new administration allowed to continue in peace. Only a month went by—and then came the opening guns!

Lincoln had told the South in his inaugural address that if there was to be a fight, they in the South would have to start it. They evidently took him at his word.

On April 12, 1861, Fort Sumter, on the coast at Charleston, South Carolina, was fired upon, and the next day it surrendered. This was the first blow of the bloody Civil War, which for the next four years was to engulf our country. The story of this great conflict has been often told. We will not attempt to trace its events here, except to show its reaction upon the President himself.

Lincoln at once issued a call for 75,000 men to "suppress the rebellion." It was believed that the prompt despatch of Federal troops to Charleston might quell the disturbance. But

the whole South was aflame, and the President's call for troops added fuel to the fire. Four more States threw in their fortunes with the seven which already formed the Confederacy. And besides these there were three or four "Border States," such as Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, which did not join either side, but were even more dangerous because of that fact.

It did not take Lincoln and his advisers long to realize that they were not facing a local rebellion. It was a *war*—and the 75,000 troops first called for would be a mere handful. The call had been for three months only —not long enough to season them for active duty.

The North awakened slowly to the danger. Recruiting camps sprang up, and men began drilling. But many said, "Oh, the trouble will be over long before I get there!" It was the same remark which was often heard at the outbreak of the World War of our own day; but wars have an unhappy faculty of persisting—especially when they have long smoldered under the surface.

Mass-meetings were held in churches,

schools, and public squares to arouse the people. It is interesting to note that one of the most active campaigners was Senator Douglas. He was tireless. On the very same platforms in Illinois, where he had met Lincoln and had told the people to let each State decide for itself, he now preached Lincoln's famous text, "The Union must be preserved at all costs!" Douglas was sincere in this change of heart; and so indefatigable was he, that he literally wore himself out speechmaking. He was taken suddenly ill, and died before the first battle of the war was fought.

Meanwhile, what of Lincoln himself at this time? We cannot do better than peep into his office in company with an eye-witness (Congressman I. N. Arnold), who thus describes it:

"The room which Lincoln used as an office was on the second floor of the White House. It was about twenty-five by forty feet in size. In the center, on the west, was a large, white marble fireplace, with big, old-fashioned brass andirons, and a large and high brass fender. A wood fire was burning in cool weather. The furniture of this room consisted of a large oak table covered with cloth, and it was around this

table that the Cabinet sat when it held its meetings. Near the end of the table, and between the windows, was another table, on the west side of which the President sat in a large armchair. The only books usually found in this room were the Bible, the United States Statutes, and a copy of Shakespeare. A bell-cord within reach of the President's hand extended to the Secretary's office. A messenger, who stood at the door, took in the cards and names of visitors.

"Here, in this plain room, Lincoln spent most of his time while President. Here he received everyone, from the Chief Justice and Lieutenant-General to the private soldier and humblest citizen. Sometimes there would be a crowd awaiting their turn. While thus waiting, the ringing laugh of Mr. Lincoln would be heard by the waiting and impatient crowd. Here, day after day, often from early morning to late at night, he sat, listened, talked, and decided. He was patient, just, considerate, and hopeful. The people came to him as to a father. He saw everyone, and many wasted his precious time. Governors, Senators, Congressmen, officers, clergymen, bankers, mer-

chants—all classes approached him with familiarity. This incessant labor, the study of the great problems he had to decide, the worry of constant importunity, the quarrels of the officers of the army, the care, anxiety, and responsibility of his position, wore upon his vigorous frame."

Lincoln himself realized that too much of his time was taken up with petty details, such as listening to office-seekers. He said, "I am like a man so busy in letting rooms at one end of his house, that he cannot stop to put out the fire that is burning at the other!"

Not the least of his pressing troubles were his relations with foreign nations. After the South declared war, it looked as though England and France might side with her. Seward wrote a despatch to England which was so dictatorial that it might easily have precipitated matters, although he felt that the United States had just grievance. Lincoln took his despatch and toned it down, at the next Cabinet meeting, until it was more tactful, without receding from our position. Seward was broad-gauge enough to recognize the improvement. He saw that Lincoln was a master at

statecraft, and he remarked later, "The President is the best of us all."

Meanwhile both sides were "itching" for a fight. The Northern troops poured into Washington from every direction, until the whole city resembled an armed camp. The Southern forces advanced to meet it, and came so close that they menaced the capital itself.

At a place called Bull Run, in Virginia, a few miles south of Washington, the opposing armies met. Many public officials and other sightseers followed the army down from the city, to see the fight. It was almost like a gala occasion. But, alas! The untrained Northern troops were badly routed. They turned and fled in mad haste back to Washington, and their flight was encumbered by the wagons and impedimenta of the sightseers. If the Southern army had pressed its advantage, it is likely that they would have seized Washington.

In the North all was dismay and confusion. The new army had been scattered like chaff before the wind. Lincoln had to listen to so many excuses from army officers, that he remarked drily, "I see—we whipped the enemy and then ran away from him!"

Lincoln had no patience with excuses. He went to work at once to build a real army—changing the personnel of officers, calling for half a million volunteers, and half a billion dollars. This time Congress responded—and the country as well. The entire North became one vast drilling ground, overnight. The farmer forsook his plow, the mechanic his tools, the clerk his counter. A marching song was heard which constantly swelled in volume—

"We are coming, Father Abraham, five hundred thousand strong!"

XV

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Lincoln wisely decided that the defeat at Bull Run was due to the greenness of the troops. They needed more training. So he placed the command in the hands of General George B. McClellan, an experienced drill-master.

All that summer and fall of 1861, the new commander worked with his army. He did his task intelligently and well; and presently his troops drilled and behaved like seasoned soldiers. Men and supplies poured in daily, and every request made by McClellan was granted. But as the weeks and months went by, and nothing was done except *drill,* the country began to get impatient. They wanted to see the sting of the defeat at Bull Run wiped out. Of course, McClellan was acting cautiously, in order to prevent a recurrence of the same blun-

der; but people thought he leaned too much on the side of caution.

Even the patient President, who often visited the camp across the Potomac, let fall a significant hint one day:

"If McClellan is through with the Army, I'd like to borrow it for the afternoon!"

Again one day when Lincoln visited the camp, and the general kept him waiting for half an hour, an indignant friend urged the President to resent such presumption. But Lincoln only replied:

"I will hold McClellan's horse, if he will only give us a victory."

Seeing that McClellan was taking his own time, Lincoln began quietly to exercise his own powers as Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Other sections of it were in the field, stretched clear across to the Mississippi, and beginning a cautious movement southward. Lincoln began to get into personal touch with all these divisions. The telegraph office was across the street from the White House, and he instituted the practice of slipping quietly over there in the evenings, and often remaining there half the night reading the stack of telegrams

on military matters. He found out all he could about the men in charge. For example, he began to notice the brilliant work in the West of an unknown officer, U. S. Grant. He studied maps of each strategic point. He read books on tactics. He began to send little words of encouragement or of criticism. Every officer in that long chain which the North was seeking to stretch around the South soon began to feel that the eye of the President was upon him personally—as indeed it was.

In the beginning of the war the Confederates, as the Southerners were called, had the best of it. Their generals were men of dash and impetuosity—always willing to "take a chance." "Stonewall" Jackson was famed for his surprise attacks. The commanding general, Robert E. Lee, was a past master in tactics and strategy. Against such men as these, McClellan's caution made a poor show. While beloved of his men, the country at large began to turn against him. They called him "the Virginia creeper."

Lincoln constantly tried to instil into his officers the snap and dash which were making the Confederates so successful. Once when

General Lee had stretched his army out across Virginia in the endeavor to protect as many points as possible, Lincoln telegraphed to General Hooker, then commanding the Army of the Potomac:

"If the head of Lee's army is at Martinsburg, and the tail of it on the plank road between Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, the animal must be very slim somewhere. Could you not break him?"

Lincoln was very anxious for McClellan to march upon Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy, but the winter wore away and still the general made excuses. Finally Lincoln lost patience, and asserted his own authority. He ordered a general advance of all the armies, and the date set was Washington's Birthday—February 22, 1862. The entire North applauded. Now it looked at last as though the war was going on.

While other armies took the field, still McClellan lingered. It was actually April when he set his force of one hundred thousand men in motion; and even then he did not march straight across country to Richmond, as Lincoln advised. He took a roundabout route,

called the Peninsular Campaign, because he went down the Potomac to the sea. But in so doing he left the way open for an attack on Washington; and Lincoln knew that Lee was too shrewd a general to miss seeing such an opening. Lincoln consequently ordered back a part of the army; and when McClellan's campaign came to an inglorious close, he blamed the President for "interfering"!

This year of 1862 was one of doubt and discouragement to Lincoln and the North. There were only two or three bright spots to relieve the gloom. One was the victory by sea at New Orleans, of the Union ships under Farragut. Another was the capture of Fort Donelson on the Mississippi by Grant, whose memorable message to the besieged of "unconditional surrender"! went ringing through the North, and caused him to be nicknamed Unconditional Surrender Grant—a name which proved prophetic.

However, in Virginia—at Washington's backdoor, so to speak—there was one defeat after another. Lincoln tried first McClellan, then Burnside, then Hooker, but all were

unsuccessful in stopping Lee. It is true that McClellan won a victory at Antietam, but he failed to follow up his advantage, and Lee withdrew his army intact, later inflicting a crushing defeat upon the Union forces at Fredericksburg. This was near the end of that fateful year.

Lincoln became at times terribly depressed over the situation. It looked as though nothing could save the Union, and of course many people blamed him as the visible head. His path was beset with difficulties. His officers wrangled; his Cabinet wrangled; but by almost superhuman efforts he kept both machines in action.

But when he was alone, he sometimes seemed to shrivel up with misery. Gone was the merry hearted boy who could always joke and laugh; and in his stead sat the big, huddled-up figure of a man who bore a nation's burdens. Lincoln had inherited a streak of melancholia which often beset him. Now he tried a strange antidote. A friend one day found him reading some of the humorous stories of Artemas Ward, and chuckling over them.

"Why, Mr. Lincoln!" the friend took it upon himself to say; "can you find time to laugh, when the country is in such straits?"

"If I didn't find time to laugh once in a while," was the reply, "I believe I should go crazy!"

XVI

LINCOLN'S HOME LIFE

No story of Lincoln would be complete without some mention of his home life, both at Springfield and Washington.

Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln lived simply and quietly in a frame dwelling in Springfield, neither better nor worse than the homes of their neighbors. She was a careful housekeeper and manager, and undoubtedly aided her husband to acquire much of the polish which was his as President. But Lincoln never outgrew many of the habits which were his from pioneer days, and which must have tried his wife sorely. He was always careless as to his attire, and this was the more noticeable from his great stature.

Even after he rose to prominence in Springfield it was no unusual sight to see him chopping his own wood, carrying water, going downtown with the basket on his arm, to mar-

ket, or sweeping off the front porch. He did anything his hands found to do—and he enjoyed doing it. And he was always ready to exchange a "howdy" with a neighbor over the back fence. These same simple manners he later took into the White House, to the despair of his wife and of punctilious officials. But Lincoln was always his simple, unaffected self.

As children came into their home, he proved a devoted father. Perhaps he remembered his own lonely childhood, and resolved to make up the deficit to his own children. There were three boys, Robert, Willie, Thomas, or "Tad," and in their babyhood he might often be seen wheeling their carriage tirelessly up and down the block in front of their home. As they grew into childhood, he would romp delightedly with them in all their games; or sprawl out at full length under the shade of some tree and tell them Indian stories. Lincoln loved all children, and many are the pleasing stories told in this regard.

After the Lincoln family removed to the White House you may well believe that the boys had lots of fun. Robert, however, was

several years older than the rest, and was in college. Willie was ten and Tad was eight at this time. Each of them had a pet goat and a wagon, and they went driving all over the lawn and out into Pennsylvania Avenue. It is even related that they drove into the White House, and interrupted more than one solemn conclave there. But the echoes of their merry voices must have been an agreeable antidote to more than one anxious heart, in that trying time. Certainly Lincoln himself did not want to curb their spirits. He let them do pretty much as they pleased. More than once he shocked some dignified Senator by getting down on hands and knees, and joining in their sports.

The year 1862 was one of the darkest in Lincoln's whole life. The Union army was suffering reverse after reverse in this second year of the war. And just at this time, Willie Lincoln sickened and died. The father's grief was terrible to see, although its outward signs were quickly suppressed. Added to his frequent spells of melancholia, and the worry over the war, it required his most heroic efforts to preserve a courageous front during this trying year.

Because of the loss of Willie, Lincoln spoiled Tad more than ever. But the boy became his constant companion, his shadow. When Lincoln took a trip to one of the army camps, Tad was sure to go along, and he was a great favorite with the soldiers.

Even Secretary Stanton, the stern head of the War Department, unbent when Tad came into the room. One day he actually appointed the lad a lieutenant in the regular army. Tad accepted the appointment with due solemnity, and insisted upon having a uniform made, chevrons and all. He drilled the special squad of soldiers detailed to guard the White House, but once when they did not quite suit him, he dismissed the lot of them, and set about recruiting a new guard from the gardeners around the grounds.

At another time, Tad decided to go in business for himself, and invested his small capital in cakes, apples, and popcorn. He set up a stand just inside the gate to the White House grounds, and proceeded to hawk his wares in approved style. As the Senators, Congressmen, diplomats, or army officers came by, they recognized the small merchant and willingly

dropped a coin into his waiting hat. He transacted business nearly all morning before his scandalized mother got wind of it, and closed up the shop. But by that time the hat jingled merrily with coins.

It is interesting to note that Lincoln never sat with his family for a portrait, and that the only member who was ever photographed with him was Tad. Brady, the famous war photographer, caught the two together one day—Tad standing at his father's knee, and both absorbed in the pages of a book. It was not a posed picture; the photographer snapped them unawares; and the result is one of the most pleasing and familiar of the Lincoln portraits.

Mr. John Hay, who as a young man was one of Lincoln's private secretaries at this time, gives us some amusing stories of Tad and his father.

"Let him run," said the latter. "He has time enough to learn his letters and get pokey. Bob was just such a little rascal, and now he is a very decent boy."

Tad was always "busy." He liked to get up things. Once he organized a minstrel show among some of his playmates. It was called

"The Black Statue," and was held in one of the upstairs rooms of the White House! A penny was the entrance fee, and it may well be believed that there was a crowd on hand to see the show.

When Lincoln rode in an open carriage down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol for the second inaugural, Tad was in the seat beside him. He was, in a sense, the mascot of the administration. It seemed as though, after the loss of Willie, Lincoln could not bear to let this other boy out of his sight.

Mascot or not, we know that Tad Lincoln did his bit toward winning the war, in his love and devotion to his over-burdened father.

XVII

THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

"Gentlemen," said Lincoln one day to the members of his Cabinet, "I have called you together to-day to consider a matter of very grave importance. But before getting down to business, I would like to read you a funny yarn I ran across, the other day."

He produced a small book from the tail pocket of his voluminous coat, and waved it at them.

"Ever read anything by Artemas Ward?" he asked. "He certainly is a droll fellow!"

The Cabinet officers looked around at each other blankly. "Queer time for a joke!" they thought. Here was the nation facing a desperate crisis, and the President called them together to read a joke to them!

But Lincoln opened the pages of his joke book as calmly as if they were all out on a picnic.

"Listen to this one," he said; and proceeded to read a short "side-splitter." Seward smiled in a dignified manner. Chase indulged in a chuckle. Others laughed more or less constrainedly. Only Stanton sat erect and defiant; he never understood this mood of Lincoln's.

The President laid aside his book; and as it hit the table he straightened up to his towering height of six feet, four inches. Gone was the merry twinkle in his eye, and his face took on a dignified earnestness.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I am about to ask your consent to an action of far-reaching import. As you know, my fight from the first has been against slavery. Now I believe the time has come to declare the slaves free."

Then he went on to outline the advantages in a military as well as moral way, of such an action. After much debate, the Cabinet agreed to his point of view, and the famous document now known as the Emancipation Proclamation was given to the world. It stated that on the first day of January, 1863, all the slaves in States in rebellion should be "then, thenceforward and forever free." It

also stated that the United States would "recognize and maintain" this freedom.

The country at large received this proclamation with varying emotions. Of course, in the South it was laughed at. "If Lincoln wants the slaves, let him come and get them!" they said; and prepared to fight harder than ever. Many in the North disapproved of emancipation—at least until the issues of war were settled. "We did not go into this thing to free slaves, but to preserve the Union," they said. Many soldiers deserted, on this account, and there was much murmuring in ranks. The possibility of accepting the black man as an equal struck them with dismay.

The Border States—those neither on the Northern nor the Southern side—were not affected by the proclamation. By its terms they could go on holding slaves if they desired. So altogether, it was a mixed-up business, and no man could foretell whether this move would be good or bad, from a political view.

But the negroes themselves, as the news slowly seeped through to them, that they were really free, were wild with joy. They hailed Lincoln as their deliverer—a second Moses

come to lead them out of the house of bondage and into the Promised Land. One old colored woman likened him to another great Bible character. She presented herself at the door of the White House one day, and waited patiently until the President should appear. When he finally did come out, he saw her standing there, and with his unvarying courtesy to high or low, he asked her if he could do anything for her.

"I jes waitin' round to see Abraham de Second," she replied.

"Abraham the Second?" he asked. "Why, who is that?"

"Well, suh, de good book done tell us all about Abraham de First. But I wants to see Abraham de Second, de man dat set us all free —bress de Lawd!"

"Well, here he is," answered the President— "such as he is!"

The woman knelt down and a look of adoration came into her eyes. Without another word she began to cry, and seizing the hem of his coat she kissed it.

Lincoln turned away hastily, and there were tears in his own eyes as he went down the

street. Perhaps he thought of that other day in New Orleans when as a mere boy he had watched the buying and selling of human slaves, and had promised himself to "hit it hard." He had kept his word.

No story of Lincoln would be complete without a glimpse of the tender heart he bore for all his soldiers—"his boys," as he called them. He was a frequent visitor at the army hospital in Washington, and many a sufferer was cheered by a word or handclasp. He visited them in the camps near the city, and would stop as readily to greet a private and ask how he was faring, as the highest officer. When the boys came through the city on furlough, it was a favorite practice of theirs to call at the White House; and the President was never too busy to see them.

He could not bear to see a soldier shot for dereliction of duty, and his constant pardons of offenses like desertion or sleeping at post got him into much hot water with Stanton and others of the War Department. They felt that his pardons would break down discipline.

Once as he signed a pardon for a young sol-

dier, sentenced to be shot for sleeping on sentinel duty, he said: "I could not think of going into eternity with the blood of that poor young man on my hands. It is not to be wondered at that a boy raised on a farm, probably in the habit of going to bed at dark, should, when required to watch, fall asleep; and I cannot consent that he be shot for such an act."

After the boy was reprieved he came in person to thank the President. Lincoln placed his hand on his shoulder, and said: "My boy, I am going to send you back to your regiment. But how are you going to pay my bill?"

"I haven't much money, Mr. President, but I will do anything you say," stammered the soldier.

"It is not money I want," said Lincoln; "but I want your promise that, come what may, you will never again shirk a duty. If when you come to die you can say, 'I have kept my promise,' then my bill will be paid."

A few weeks later the young soldier was killed, fighting bravely at Fredericksburg. Next his heart was a photograph of Lincoln, and on it he had written: "God bless President Lincoln." He had kept his promise.

A Union officer relates this anecdote: "The first week of my command there were twenty-four deserters sentenced by court-martial to be shot, and the warrants for their execution were sent to the President to be signed. He refused. I went to Washington and had an interview. I said, 'Mr. President, unless these men are made an example of, the army itself is in danger. Mercy to the few is cruelty to the many.' He replied, 'Mr. General, there are already too many weeping widows in the United States. For God's sake, don't ask me to add to the number, for *I won't do it!*'"

His ready sympathy for "his boys" endeared him to them. They were ready to go through fire and water for him. On his visits to camp he did not disdain to pause and "swap a yarn." One joke which he picked up and was fond of relating in the dignified Stanton's presence was to the effect that the latter on a tour of inspection in North Carolina was on a tug boat passing up a river, when the picket challenged them.

"Who goes there?" he asked.

"The Secretary of War and Major-General Foster," was the reply.

"We've got secretaries and generals enough up here already," was the reply. "Why don't you bring us up some hardtack?"

On one visit to McClellan's camp, a big dress parade was planned. Lincoln was invited to ride the lines with the general, and accepted. The staff officers smiled in their sleeves at this, for McClellan was one of the finest horsemen in the army, and they fancied the President would cut a ridiculous figure beside him. A spirited black horse was brought to the President, but the moment he seized the reins the staff officers began to "take notice." He quieted the plunging animal with a word, and easily sprang into the saddle. Down between the lines they went, the President managing his horse with one hand, riding easily, and returning the salutes.

McClellan, on his own well-broken mount, led the way and finally paused near a group of big guns, which presently went off with a tremendous explosion. Then the bands struck up, "Hail to the Chief!" The soldiers cheered. The big black horse curvetted, as well he might. But there sat Lincoln, as though he and the horse were one—the bridle rein held in one

hand, his silk hat in the other, smiling and acknowledging the salute.

"Gosh! He sure can ride!" muttered one soldier.

"He sure can," said another. "If we only had old Abe to lead us, something would happen!"

And probably he was right.

XVIII

GETTYSBURG

Lincoln tried, one after another, three generals for the Army of the Potomac, but none of them was a match for General Lee. After the crushing defeat which the latter administered to Burnside at Fredericksburg, the Confederates advanced across the Potomac into Pennsylvania. They were carrying the fight into the enemy's country.

Lincoln removed Burnside and put Meade in command. His orders were terse.

"Go get Lee!" was the word.

Meade started in pursuit and overtook Lee at Gettysburg. The date was July 1, 1863—one of the most momentous in the annals of our nation. The Southern forces, flushed with victory, did not seek to avoid the combat, though they were outnumbered. This was not the first time they had met superior numbers of

Northern troops. The battle began on that July morning and for three days it raged. Back and forth surged the contending lines, high deeds of bravery being shown on both sides, and terrible was the slaughter.

Back in Washington, the President fairly haunted the telegraph office. He could not wait for the messages to be decoded and relayed to him in due course. He sat alongside of the operator and himself deciphered the messages as they came in. During those three terrible days he scarcely stopped for sleep or food. By the end of the third day he was so utterly worn out, that Stanton took a hand.

"Go home, Mr. President," he said gently but firmly. "Go home, and I myself will stay by the instrument and keep you advised."

Lincoln, too tired to protest, went, and soon was sleeping as one dead to the world.

About midnight, the clicker sounded the news that the Union forces had won the victory, and that Lee's army was in full retreat. Stanton seized the message, dashed across the street, went past the sentry at the White House door, and up the steps two at a time, and pounded on the door of Lincoln's room.

"Who's there?" called the President.

"Stanton!" was the reply.

Lincoln bounded out of bed and without waiting to dress, opened the door, revealing, as Stanton afterwards said, a figure clad in the shortest nightshirt and sporting the longest pair of legs he ever saw.

"We've won!" Stanton managed to gasp out, for he was short-winded from his run.

He did not need to say more, for Lincoln had read the news in his face. Grabbing Stanton by the shoulders he danced madly with him around the room—and Stanton danced too! Then Lincoln sat down on a trunk and, still in his nightshirt, proceeded to study that precious telegram.

"We've won!" he cried, echoing Stanton's call. "Meade's got him! Now if he will only follow Lee up and crush him, the war will be over in ninety days."

But for some strange reason, Meade, like McClellan and the rest, did not follow up his advantage. True, his army was weary from three days of fighting, but it was still stronger than Lee's shattered columns. Even when Lee was forced to divide his troops to cross the

Potomac, still Meade did not strike. And once in Virginia, Lee reformed his army.

Some whispered that there was "politics" in Meade's inaction. Like McClellan, he was willing to "embarrass" the President, especially since the Emancipation Proclamation, which had been severely criticized. We do not know to-day how much truth there was in such statements, but we do know that Meade held Lee in the hollow of his hand, and let him get away.

Lincoln's first flush of enthusiasm over this victory gave way to despair. Was he never to find a general who could do things—carry them through to a finish? And he began to think of a certain "Unconditional Surrender" Grant who was still hammering away in the West—aided and abetted by a dashing officer, Phil Sheridan.

On the very day that the news of Gettysburg went broadcast to the nation, July 4, 1863—and a great Fourth of July it was!—Grant telegraphed that the forts at Vicksburg, Mississippi had fallen before his troops. They held the key to the great river, and the "Father of Waters went unvexed to the sea."

The news of these two victories fired the North with fresh hope. They silenced for the moment Lincoln's own critics—for he had borne the brunt of all the dissatisfaction, as head of the nation. They also put at rest the persistent rumors that England was going to recognize the Confederacy, which move had seemed imminent more than once.

When Lincoln saw that Meade was not going to strike back at Lee, he called General Halleck, who was Grant's superior, from the West, to take charge of the Eastern forces. Grant himself he made Commander-in-Chief in the West. It was the first step to the supreme command of the Union forces which Grant later obtained, and which, as we all know, was to prove the final checkmate for Lee. Grant had many enemies, especially among the politicians at Washington. But when they came buzzing around Lincoln with their disparaging remarks, his only answer was, "I cannot spare this man. He *fights!*"

Grant did fight. He took up affairs in the West with an energy and promptness which convinced Lincoln that he had found his man at last. Ordered to relieve the shut-in Union

forces at Chattanooga, Grant promptly moved east and in the brilliant battle "above the clouds," at Lookout Mountain, split the Southern armies in two. Then he sent Sherman on his march through Georgia to the sea.

So the summer and fall of 1863 saw brighter skies for the Union than at any time since the war had started. In a spirit of thanksgiving as well as of devotion to the dead, a national cemetery was dedicated on the field of Gettysburg, where so many thousands had laid down their lives.

A multitude met on a gray November day to witness the dedication exercises. A large chorus of trained voices furnished the music; and Edward Everett, a brilliant New England orator, had been chosen as the speaker of the occasion. The President was expected to attend and would deliver "a few appropriate remarks." Though pressed with official duties, Lincoln set out for Gettysburg at the appointed time, and, it is said, scribbled the few words of his "appropriate remarks" on a scrap of paper.

For two hours the polished Everett held the attention of the audience, pouring forth all the

eloquence and fire for which he was famous. It was a great address. The crowd applauded. The choir sang another song. And then the tall form of Lincoln arose, with his familiar "stovepipe" hat, and a long scarf around his shoulders, such as he often wore.

In a voice trembling with emotion and yet gaining in clearness after the first words, he began to speak. Then after only two or three minutes, when the crowd had just begun to get keyed up to his message—he sat down again!

The crowd was disappointed. "Is that all?" they asked each other.

Secretary Seward was no less disappointed. He leaned over and whispered to Everett, "He has made a failure, and I am sorry for it. He is tired out. His speech does not do him justice."

Lincoln himself, when he looked over that silent throng, felt that he had failed. He had not had time to prepare any special message, but he had tried to give them a few sentences straight from his heart and soul.

And that was precisely what he had done.

As soon as his "Gettysburg Address" was flashed to the world, people read it, and reread it. They have been reading and reciting it ever since, for it has been acclaimed a masterpiece, a model of terse English and trenchant thought.

Edward Everett himself recognized this, as soon as he saw the speech in type. He sat down and wrote Lincoln the following generous and graceful tribute:

"I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near the central idea of the occasion in two hours, as you did in two minutes."

This is what Lincoln said on that day:

"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

"Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting-place for those who

here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

"But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

XIX

LINCOLN IS REELECTED

The year 1864 was another momentous one in Lincoln's life. He had finally placed Grant at the head of the Union forces, and people thought that now the South would be brought to its knees. But Lee and Johnston still proved too resourceful for their opponents, as was proved in the bloody battles of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, and Cold Harbor. Grant lost 50,000 men in a single month. But he shut his lips grimly, and issued this famous message:

"I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer."

More men must be forthcoming, however, and since volunteering had fallen off, Lincoln was forced to resort to conscription. In New York City such opposition was encountered that the Draft Riots resulted, many lives were

lost, and 10,000 troops had to be sent there to restore order.

How different from the drafts of our own day, made necessary by the World War! We submitted all over the country to this stern necessity as a matter of course.

But one result of the draft in Lincoln's day was to imperil seriously his chances of reëlection to the presidency. The elections were to be held in the fall. He had bitter rivals in his own party, chief of whom was Salmon P. Chase, who left the Cabinet in order to oppose him. But Chase's own State, Ohio, favored Lincoln. He received the nomination, with Andrew Johnson, war Governor of Tennessee, as Vice-President. Johnson, like Lincoln, had been a poor boy in his youth, and had run a tailor shop in Greenville.

When the committee informed Lincoln of his nomination, he said quizzically: "I do not allow myself to suppose that the Convention have concluded that I am either the greatest or the best man in America; but rather they have concluded it is not best to swap horses while crossing a stream; and have further concluded that I am not so poor a horse but that they

might make a botch of it if they tried to swap."

The homely phrase, "Don't swap your horses while crossing a stream," instantly caught on, and was used with telling effect in the campaign which ensued. Folks thought that, after all, Lincoln might be right. With him still in office, and the stubborn Grant who was going "to fight it out if it took all summer" —they felt they had a team they could not afford to swap.

The other party nominated—of all persons —McClellan! That general had nursed a grudge against Lincoln ever since the opening of the war, and now saw his opportunity to get square. His platform promised a speedy ending of the war, but advised a truce and a peaceful agreement. Four years of bloodshed was enough, they said. Let's patch up our differences with the Southern States, and be friends. Many prominent men of Lincoln's own party indorsed this idea, and for a time it looked as though McClellan might be elected. Lincoln himself took no part in the campaign. He was so rushed with war duties that he had no time; and he had come to view the result with some indifference.

"If the people want somebody else, let them have him," he said.

His attention was called to the fact that a cabal was at work against him in the army. Others of the disgruntled generals whom he had felt forced to remove from the leadership were making speeches for McClellan.

"Let them speak all they want to," he replied. "Supporting General McClellan for the presidency is not a violation of the army regulations; and as a question of taste in choosing between him and me—well, I'm the longest, but he's better looking!"

McClellan, however, was not "better-looking" to the voters of the country; and Lincoln was reëlected by a popular majority of half a million votes. When the result was announced, Lincoln, who was over at the War Department cracking jokes and apparently unmindful of the election, turned to an orderly and said:

"Send the word over to Madam. She will be more interested than I am."

Just as on the former occasion in Springfield, his first thought in this moment of triumph was of his wife.

When the South saw that Lincoln's policies

were to continue, and that their armies were gradually getting the worst of it, they asked for a peace parley with him in person at Hampton Roads. They sent their Vice-President, Alexander H. Stephens, to meet him and Lincoln, against the advice of his friends, went down to the conference. But it came to naught, as the first demand made by the Southerners was the recognition of the Confederacy, and to that Lincoln would never consent.

However, when he went back to Washington he did try to launch a project which he had long considered. He told his Cabinet that he wanted to ask Congress to appropriate four hundred million dollars *to buy the slaves from the South.* This was on condition that they would lay down their arms and reënter the Union.

Lincoln had long felt that since the slaves were *property,* it would be fairer to the owners to purchase this property and then free the slaves. But to a man his Cabinet opposed the idea. So determined were they that the President said sorrowfully: "Very well, gentlemen, I see you are all opposed to me. I will not send the message."

Instead, they prepared an amendment to the Constitution, which forbade slavery within the borders of the United States, and after Congress passed it, the requisite number of States ratified it.

At his New Year's reception, January 1, 1865, and the last that he was ever to hold, hundreds of negroes clustered in the White House lawn hesitating to enter but desirous of greeting this man who had done so much for them. It was late in the day when the crowd of white persons thinned out, and the negroes began timidly to come in. Lincoln was very tired from a day of hand-shaking, but when he heard of the crowd of negroes outside, he said, "Tell them all to come in."

And in they flocked, crowding about him, kissing his hands or his coat, weeping, and calling on Heaven to bless him. The colored race has always been sentimental and childlike. They had come to regard Lincoln as their earthly savior and almost more than mortal. As the President saw this crowd of simple folk looking to him as to a god he must have felt a great joy—and a great responsibility.

But already the negro was beginning to

show his sense of responsibility. Negro regiments had been recruited which gave a good account of themselves. And in the second inaugural procession these negro troops marched with soldierly bearing. Negro schools were being started, and other civic bodies organized.

This second inaugural, March 4, 1865, was even more solemn and impressive than had been the first one, four years before, when an untried man was being inducted into office. The country was still at war, but the general feeling was that it must end soon. And Lincoln had measured up to his task.

In his present speech he sounded the same note he had struck four years earlier. He held no hatred toward any party or section, but again stated that his object had been to live up to his oath and protect the Union.

"Both parties deprecated war," he said. "But one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came."

And he ended with these memorable words:

"Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray,

that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

"With malice toward none, with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and for his orphan; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

XX

THE CLOSING SCENE

After that second inaugural great events trod rapidly upon one another's heels. The great war was nearing its final stages. Sherman had ended his victorious march to the sea, and was now pressing back north, driving Johnston, the Confederate general, before him. Sheridan had cleaned up the Shenandoah Valley with a dash and brilliancy which recalled the feats of Stonewall Jackson, the Southern leader, who had lost his life. Grant still pounded on Lee and had finally forced him back to Richmond. The Southern armies, shut in between Grant and Sherman, were like wheat between the upper and nether millstone.

About this time Lincoln decided to take a vacation. But he chose to spend it behind the lines. With Mrs. Lincoln and their small son,

Tad, he went down the Potomac and up the James rivers, to Grant's headquarters, near Petersburg. He remained there ten days and enjoyed the army life hugely. It also enabled him to escape the throng of office-seekers which so constantly beset him in Washington.

Much of the time during his visit he spent on the steamer, *River Queen,* and here, late in March, occurred a memorable meeting between him, Generals Grant and Sherman, and Admiral Porter, who commanded the navy. As they discussed plans for the next engagements, Lincoln exclaimed more than once, "Must more blood be shed? Cannot this last bloody battle be avoided?"

General Sherman adds this personal tribute: "When I left Mr. Lincoln I was more than ever impressed by his kindly nature, his deep and earnest sympathy with the afflictions of the whole people. I felt that his earnest desire was to end the war speedily, without more bloodshed or devastation, and to restore all the men of both sections to their homes. In the language of his second inaugural address, he seemed to have 'charity for all, malice toward none.' "

LEADERS OF THE CIVIL WAR
Lincoln, Porter, Farragut, Sherman, Thomas, Grant and Sheridan

This same trait of forbearance was brought out a few days later, when the stronghold of Petersburg fell into the hands of Union troops. Lincoln and Porter visited the city and, with General Grant, sat for nearly two hours watching the troops pass by. It was a famous group, and the soldiers and citizens greeted them with hearty cheers. Lincoln's face, which had grown so haggard and careworn during the months of strife, seemed years younger. He laughed and joked like a boy. Presently a throng of Southern prisoners of war passed by. But, far from being dejected, they were laughing and joking among themselves. Each had a huge chunk of bread and meat—the first real food they had had in days. Moreover, most of them were Virginians and were going back to their homes. When they caught sight of Lincoln, they at once recognized him, but greeted him in friendly fashion and he waved his hand in return. Admiral Porter himself describes this scene:

" 'That's Old Abe,' said one in a low voice. 'Give the old fellow three cheers,' said another. While a third called out, 'Hello, Abe, your bread and meat's better than popcorn!' It was

all good-natured and not meant in unkindness. I could see no difference between them and our own men, except that they were ragged and attenuated for want of wholesome food. They were as happy a set of men as ever I saw. They could see their homes looming up before them in the distance, and knew that the war was over.

" 'They will never shoulder a musket again in anger,' said the President, 'and if Grant is wise he will leave them their guns to shoot crows with. It would do no harm.' "

It is pleasant to note that Grant had the same idea, and when the surrender of Lee came, only a few days later, he refused the latter's proffered sword, shook hands with him instead, fed his men, and told them to go back home and start plowing!

When news came that Richmond had fallen, Lincoln said, "The whole of this last four years seems like a horrid nightmare. I must see Richmond." And visit it he did, with only a small bodyguard, walking freely around the streets of this shattered Southern town, although at any moment a bullet from some skulking enemy might have laid him low.

Indeed, he heard of many threats of assassination during these troubled days, but paid no attention to them. On his return to Washington, Mrs. Lincoln remarked, "Please be careful. Washington is filled with our enemies."

Turning to her quickly, he said, "Don't use that word. We have no enemies now."

He had already put the war in the background and was willing to accept any man, North or South, as his friend. We have previously noted the fact that both he and Mrs. Lincoln were Southern by birth. Two of her brothers fought on the Southern side, and one of them was dangerously wounded at Shiloh. While he lay ill, Mrs. Lincoln was called upon, as mistress of the White House, to open a ball in celebration of this victory.

But many a home had been divided by this dread war, and Lincoln was anxious to forget the "nightmare" as quickly as possible. He repeatedly urged his generals to "be lenient," and it was furthest from his desires to inflict any penalty whatever upon the South or its leaders. Had his life been spared, the history of the South after the war, and of that tragedy

called "Reconstruction," would have been different. For there were those in Congress who thought that the Southern States should be treated like "conquered provinces."

The glad tidings of Lee's surrender came on April 9. Five days later, Lincoln had his regular Cabinet meeting. The whole text of his discourse was reconciliation. There were to be no reprisals, no punishments of any sort, he said. If the leaders of the late Confederacy wanted to leave the country, they might do so. If they wanted to remain as fellow-citizens, that also was their privilege.

"Gentlemen, they are our brothers," he said.

And every member of the Cabinet went away that day marveling at the bigness of Abraham Lincoln.

That night, by way of relaxation, Lincoln went with Mrs. Lincoln and a party of friends to Ford's Theater, to attend a farce called "Our American Cousin." The party was late in arriving, and the play had already begun when they entered the upper boxes reserved for them. The audience recognized the President by rising and waving their handkerchiefs and applauding, until he was seated. He

acknowledged their cheers, and sat down to enjoy the play. A great load was off his mind, and for the first time since becoming President he felt carefree and happy.

The third act of the play was on, and all, including the President, were laughing at the droll situation, when suddenly a pistol shot was heard, and a moment later a man sprang from the rail of the President's box to the stage below. The man was a half-crazed actor, John Wilkes Booth, who thought that by this bloody deed he had "avenged the South." But instead he had struck down one who might have been the South's best friend. Booth waved his smoking weapon, shouting, "Sic semper tyrannis!"—then sprang back of the stage and made his escape.

For a moment no one sensed the import of this interruption. Then like a shudder a whisper ran through the house:

"The President is shot! He is dying!"

All eyes turned to the Presidential box. All its occupants were in wild commotion, except one still figure, over whom Mrs. Lincoln bent sobbing. He sat with head bent forward upon his breast—unconscious.

Past the throng which was now in wild uproar they carried the limp figure to a lodging-house nearby, and laid it upon the bed. Physicians were hastily summoned, and everything that mortal man could do was done to restore the spark of life. But the fatal bullet had pierced his brain, and Lincoln never recovered consciousness. The next morning shortly after sunrise he breathed his last.

Stanton turned to the others around the bedside, his rugged face contorted with grief. In a hoarse whisper, he said:

"Now he belongs to the Ages!"

XXI

A NATION'S GRIEF

When the news was flashed from state to state that Lincoln was slain, the whole nation paused in horror and amazement. It could not be true, they said!

The great war-President had made many enemies and critics both North and South, in that titanic struggle of four years. Any mortal man would have done so. But now that he was stricken down, they began to realize what manner of man he was.

In the South, after the first feeling of exultation on the part of the most bitterly partisan, they began to see Lincoln in his true light, as a genuine friend of the South. They were destined to see this more and more, in the bitter years that were to follow, and to regret that his gentle, forgiving spirit did not brood over the troubled waters of Washington.

In the North, people gave themselves over to unrestrained expressions of grief. Some went along the street weeping unrestrainedly. Others who were total strangers to one another stopped and talked together like brothers over the loss of a father. In thousands of homes emblems of mourning were displayed. Business was completely suspended.

A scene in Philadelphia, when the news first reached there, was typical of occurrences all over the land.

"We had taken our seats in the early car to ride downtown," says an eye-witness, "men and boys going to work. The morning papers had come up from town as usual, and the men unrolled them to read as the car started. The eye fell on the black border and ominous column lines. Before we could speak, a good Quaker at the head of the car broke out in horror:

" 'My God! What's this? *Lincoln is assassinated!*'

"The driver stopped the car, and came in to hear the awful tidings. There stood the car, mid-street, as the heavy news was read in the gray dawn of that ill-fated day. Men bowed

their heads in their hands, and on the straw-covered floor hot tears fell fast. Silently the driver took the bells from his horses, and we started like a hearse city-ward.

"What a changed city since the day before! Then all was joy over the end of the war; now we were plunged in a deeper gulf of woe. The sun rose on a city smitten and weeping. All traffic stood still; the icy hand of death lay flat on the heart of commerce, and it gave not a throb. Men stood by their open stores saying, with hands on each other's shoulders, 'Our President is dead! Our President is dead!' "

A regiment of negro soldiers formed the guard of honor for the funeral procession from the White House to the Capitol, where the casket lay in state in the rotunda. There for hours the citizens passed by silently to look for the last time upon the homely but beloved face. Many went out the door sobbing aloud and without restraint.

A special funeral car, entirely draped in black, but with glass sides permitting a view within, carried the casket back by rail along the same route which Lincoln had followed when he came to Washington to be in-

augurated. The highest officers of the Army and Navy and deputations from the Senate and House of Representatives acted as honorary escort.

The scene in the Capitol at Washington was repeated at the Pennsylvania Capitol. The State set aside an official day of mourning. In New York City half a million persons filed by to pay a last tribute to the martyred president. At Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo and Cleveland, other stops were made, where countless thousands thronged about the casket. But the most pathetic mourners of all were those of the countryside and way stations where the car did not stop, who sat by the railroad track all day long to wait and watch for its coming, and who, perchance, threw garlands of flowers at the black-draped car as it sped by.

No conqueror of old was ever accorded such a triumph, marching in at the head of his legions, as was the mortal remains of Abraham Lincoln on the way back to his Illinois home.

In the State Capitols of Ohio and Indiana —at Columbus and Indianapolis—official honors were paid his memory. Next came

Chicago, where was such an outpouring that it seemed as if the entire city were there. And finally they stopped at the Springfield Capitol, where his home folks received and paid homage to their own.

After a simple funeral service, the coffin-lid was closed for the last time. There was a hymn, a prayer, a brief address, and the reading of Lincoln's own Second Inaugural Address, with its lofty words of closing:

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and for his orphan; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

It was a fitting summing-up of Lincoln's own life work. He had striven to bind up the nation's wounds—to achieve a just and lasting peace. And no man—not even his bitterest enemy—when once he came to know that gen-

erous heart could accuse Lincoln of "malice" or lack of "charity for all."

Lincoln's body was laid to rest in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois, on March 14, 1865.

Years after, a grateful nation transported the timbers of his humble birthplace from Hodgensville, Kentucky, piece by piece, and set them up again within a splendid memorial building at Washington. It is there not so much to honor Lincoln, for he needs no such monument to-day, as to serve as an example and incentive to every other young American. "Here," it seems to say, "is what one poor, ignorant, backwoods boy accomplished!"

James Russell Lowell has eloquently voiced this theme in his Ode to Lincoln:

"Nature, they say, doth dote,
And cannot make a man
Save on some worn-out plan,
Repeating us by rote;
For him her Old-World moulds aside she threw,
And choosing sweet clay from the breast
Of the unexhausted West,
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.

"Great captains, with their guns and drums
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes;
These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly, earnest, brave, fore-seeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American."

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